

# Thailand Herping Report by David Frohlich (*Acrochordus granulatus*)

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I decided to go herping in a mangrove forest near Pranburi, Thailand with a friend of mine, George. We arrived there at about 8:00 p.m. The weather during March was warm and the sky was clear. Surprisingly not many insects were calling. We found 3 Long-nosed Vine Snakes (*Ahaetulla nasuta*) in the first 30 minutes of the walk and we were very happy with that. But they were nothing compared to the next snake I spotted about 1 hour later at about 9:30 p.m.

I saw a black and white banded snake surfacing in mid-river for air. I immediately ran into the water to grab it! My first thought was that it's a krait of some sort, but then quickly realized that its not. It turns out it was the rare Marine File Snake also known as the "Wart Snake" (*Acrochordus granulatus*)! These snakes grow to about 1 meter long and has black and white banding the entire length of the body. They are rather rare marine snakes that are active at night and are predominantly water dwellers. They eat small fish and saltwater eels. What a beautiful snake! I had never seen one of these before. The skin feels rough like sand, but at the same time very soft as well. Unlike any snake I have ever felt, very difficult to describe. The eyes are bright blue and the tail is slightly flattened into a paddle shape. Once I brought it out on land to get a good look at it, I felt 7 huge lumps in the snakes body in the back half of the body. I'm assuming she is pregnant and those lumps are the juveniles, these snakes don't lay eggs like most snakes, they give live birth. I am very happy to have found this truly awesome snake

in Thailand.

The Marine File Snake is non-venomous and of no danger to humans. *Acrochordus granulatus* can be quickly identified by small blue eyes located on top it's head, the lack of enlarged ventral scales, and loose-fitting skin with a gritty, sandy feel to it. On land, it is very sluggish and moves slowly. This snake is in the same Genus as the Javan File Snake (*Acrochordus javanicus*), which is brown in color, as thick as a human leg, and up to 3 meters in length.

Here is a short video of the snake:

Here are some photos of the Marine File Snake in the location found:



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