

An Observation on Diet of the Cameron Highlands Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus (Popeia) nebularis*)

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Trimeresurus nebularis is a medium-sized nocturnal venomous snake that resides in montane forests at altitudes above 1200 m elev. Once thought to be an endemic to the Cameron Highlands of Pahang state, Peninsular Malaysia (Vogel et al. 2004.), it has since been recorded at other hill stations within the country as well as Narathiwat province in extreme southern Thailand (Chan-ard et al 2015.) Known prey includes frogs, lizards, and mammals. Here, we report the first record of predation by *T. nebularis* upon a member of the *Erinaceidae* family - *Hylomys suillus*.

At 2040 h on 18 August 2018, we encountered a recently deceased adult female *T. nebularis*

(SVL = 672 mm, total length = 820 mm) (Fig. 1) laying amongst vegetation on the verge of a forest trail close to the town of Tanah Rata in the Cameron Highlands, Peninsular Malaysia (4.463576°N 101.387935°E; WGS 84, 1415 m elev). The cause of death was unknown; however, no visible recent injuries were present. Mucous covering the snake's anterior half suggests that it may have been partially consumed and regurgitated by another snake. A large prey item was noticeable within the deceased snake; dissection revealed an adult *Hylomys suillus* (short-tailed moon rat) measuring 132 mm total length. *Trimeresurus nebularis* is known to feed on small mammals, though to the best of our knowledge this



Figure 1: *Hylomys suillus* retrieved from the stomach of a deceased *Trimeresurus nebularis*.

observation is the first record of *T. nebularis* predating upon *H. suillus*. We would like to thank Evan Quah for his assistance with identifying the prey item.

References:

Chan-ard, T., Parr, J.W.K. & Nabhitabhata, J. (2015). *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of Thailand*. Oxford University Press, New York. 292-293

Vogel, G. & David, P. & Pauwels, O. (2004). A review of morphological variation in *Trimeresurus popeiorum* (Serpentes: Viperidae: Crotalinae), with the description of two new species. *Zootaxa* **727**: 1-63.