

## CATALOGUE OF HERPETOLOGICAL TYPES IN THE COLLECTION OF THE RAFFLES MUSEUM OF BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

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**ABSTRACT.** – The Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, which incorporates the Zoological Reference Collection at the National University of Singapore, contains the largest zoological reference collection in south-east Asia. Being the inheritor of the collections of the old Raffles Museum, and subsequently, the National Museum, it is a repository of historical specimens collected by pioneering south-east Asian biologists including R. Hanitsch, J. C. Moulton, F. N. Chasen and M. W. F. Tweedie. Name-bearing types of some of the older specimens appeared in papers authored by M. A. Smith and W. Hennig, among others. In the catalogue of herpetological types compiled here, types of seven amphibian and 13 reptile species are indicated, comprising a total of 48 type material (nine holotypes, 27 paratypes and 12 syntypes).

**KEY WORDS.** – Amphibians, reptiles, type catalogue, Zoological Reference Collection, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Singapore.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Zoological Reference Collection of Singapore was started in 1849 at the Raffles Museum, which was named after the founder of Singapore city, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826). This collection was renamed the National Museum of Singapore in 1961. In 1972, when the National Museum decided to concentrate on its role as an ethnological, historical and art museum, the zoological collections, as well as library, were transferred to the National University of Singapore (NUS), where it incorporated the collections of the former University of Singapore and the Nanyang University. Due to problems of storage space, the collection was moved four times, till it finally settled, in 1987, at the present facility in the Science Library Building at the NUS's Kent Ridge Campus where it became the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC). In 1998, the ZRC became part of the new Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research (see Ng, 2000).

The early collections were mostly donations from the landed gentry (including Whampoa Hoo Ah Kay, Lim Boon Keng

and His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Johore). Eminent local and European naturalists who served as staff of the Museum include Karl Richard Hanitsch (1860-1940), the first Curator and Librarian between 1895-1919; John Coney Moulton (1886-1926), former Curator of the Sarawak Museum, and Director of the Raffles Museum between 1919-1923; Cecil Boden Kloss (1877-1949), Director between 1923-1932; Frederick Nutter Chasen (1897-1942), Assistant Curator between 1921-1932, becoming Director between 1932-1942; Michael Wilmer Forbes Tweedie (1907-1993), Assistant Curator in 1932, becoming Curator in the same year, until 1941, and Director between 1946-1971; Carl A. Gibson-Hill (1911-1963), Curator between 1947-1957, becoming Director in 1957 till 1963; and Eric R. Alfred, Curator between 1957-1967, and Director between 1967-1972.

The first expedition of the Museum was conducted by Hanitsch, in 1895, to the neighbouring islands of Pulau Brani and Pulau Blakang Mati (at present Sentosa Island). Subsequently, the Museum organized a major expedition to Mount Kinabalu in Borneo, from where important collections of virtually all groups of animals were made (see Hanitsch,