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Gerarda prevostiana (Eydoux and Gervais, 1837) (Squamata: Serpentes: Homalopsidae), a New Snake for Borneo

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Abstract A new record of the homalopsid snake, *Gerarda prevostiana* is presented from a mangrove-dominated patch in the vicinity of Kampung Bako, Sarawak, East Malaysia, and this comprises the first published record from the Sundaic Island of Borneo. A possible second locality for the species is a ca. 6.68 km site to its northeast, Kampung Buntal, based on an unlocated museum specimen. The species is widespread in mainland Southeast Asia, with additional records to the west (the Indian Subcontinent) and east (the Philippines Archipelago), but was previously unrecorded from the islands of the Sundas. The secretive habits of the species, including the occupancy of mud lobster (*Thalassinia* spp.) mounds in mostly inaccessible, swampy habitats may be a reason for its perceived rarity and few published records.

Keywords *Gerarda prevostiana*, serpentes, Squamata, Homalopsidae, Borneo, new record

Gerarda prevostiana was described as *Coluber* (*Homalopsis*) *prevostianus* Eydoux & Gervais (1837), based on a specimen (currently untraced) from "Manille" (= Manila, 14°37' N, 120°58' E, Luzon, Philippines). Its dietary habits, unique amongst snakes, include tearing out bite-sized pieces of recently molted crabs (Murphy, 2007). The species has been described as secretive, and is known from isolated localities following the coastline in the Indian Subcontinent, as far west as Gujarat, extending east through coastal Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, and also the Philippines (Tweedie, 1983; Murphy, 2007). It has not been reported in the literature from Borneo (Das, 2012).

On 16 October 2012, at 22:10 h, an adult *G. prevostiana* (snout-vent length 335 mm, tail length 48.5 mm; UNIMAS 9396; Figures 1–3) was collected from an asphalt road through a patch of mangroves dominated by the Nipa palm, *Nypa fruticans*, in the vicinity of Kampung Bako (01º40'22" N, 110º26'33.5" E; datum WGS 84; Figure 4), Kuching Division, Sarawak, East Malaysia. It was photographed in life, euthanised, and fixed in formalin after removal of a tissue sample for future molecular work, which was preserved in 70% ethanol, and accessioned with the collection of UNIMAS, Kota Samarahan.

Abbreviations and conventions include: BW (body width, width at middle of body), DSR (dorsal scale rows, from head to vent), HL (head length, distance between snout tip and angle of jaws), HW (head width, across gape), SVL (snout-vent length), TL (tail length), and UNIMAS (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak), museum of the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. Additionally. '/' separates a scale count on the left and right sides of the body.

The morphology agrees well with the descriptions of *G. prevostiana* given by Gyi (1970) and Murphy (2007): body moderately elongate, cylindrical; scales smooth; parietals well developed; anterior genials larger than posterior ones; midbody scale rows 17; ventrals broad, lacking keels; tail short, terminating in a sharp tip; subcaudals divided; anal divided; maxillary teeth followed by two enlarged, recurved teeth posteriorly, mandibular

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