

**The BIODIVERSITY**  
*of a*  
**PEAT SWAMP**  
**Forest in Sarawak**

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Universiti Malaysia Sarawak  
Kota Samarahan  
2006

First Published 2006  
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Published in Malaysia by  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK  
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Printed in Malaysia by  
Lee Miing Press Sdn Bhd (541980-U)  
Lot 143, 1st Floor, Abell Road,  
93100 Kuching, Sarawak

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia  
Fatimah Abang

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

The biodiversity of a peat swamp forest in Sarawak / Fatimah Abang,  
Indraneil Das.

Includes bibliographical references

ISBN: 983-9257-45-5

1. SWAMP ECOLOGY--SARAWAK. 2. WETLAND ECOLOGY--SARAWAK.  
3. WETLAND FOREST--SARAWAK. I. INDRANEIL DAS. II. TITLE.  
577.680959522

# 8

## THE REPTILE FAUNA

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**ABSTRACT.**– The reptile fauna of a peat swamp forest and its margins at Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Borneo, was inventoried over a period of five years (1998–2003). In all, 21 squamate species were recorded, including 13 lizard species and eight snake species. No species obligate to this peat swamp was found, although a palustrine crocodile, *Crocodylus raninus*, is known to be restricted to peat swamp habitats of Borneo. Divided into ecological categories, 13 species are exclusively arboreal, five terrestrial and one aquatic. Additionally, the lacertid lizard, *Takydromus sexlineatus*, although collected from terrestrial habitats in the study area, is generally associated with grass and saplings elsewhere. The high number of species that are arboreal, compared to rainforests, is therefore remarkable, and probably a reflection of the water-logged nature of peat swamps. When separated by diel time of activity, 12 are exclusively diurnal, eight exclusively nocturnal. The crotalid, *Tropidolaemus wagleri*, cannot be classified as being either diurnal or nocturnal, being active both during the day and at night.

**KEY WORDS.**– Herpetofauna, reptile, peat swamp, biodiversity, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Borneo.

### INTRODUCTION

Peat swamps support a distinctive forest type that is widespread in the Malay Peninsular, Sumatra and northern Borneo (Maltby et al., 1996). Although the ecosystem value of this forest type is known (James, 1991; Janzen, 1974), human