

***AHAETULLA FASCIOLATA* (FISCHER, 1885), NEW RECORD FOR THE FAUNA OF THAILAND**

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THREE SNAKES

Since the revision of the snakes of Thailand by Taylor in 1965 many previously unrecorded snakes have been added to the list. This is especially true for the tree snakes some of which have been identified as a new species. These include *Boiga ocellata* (Kroon, 1973), *Trimeresurus macrops* (Kramer, 1977), *Trimeresurus wiroti* (Trutnau, 1982), *Boiga sangsomii* (Nutaphand, 1985), *Trimeresurus venustus* (Vogel, 1991). Those species already known from Malaysia include *Chrysopelia pelias* (Nutaphand, 1971), *Lepturophis borneensis* (Vogel & Kreutz, 1990) and *Dendrelaphis striatus* (Vogel, 1990).

During my last visit to Thailand I obtained three snakes from the locals which appeared at first glance to be young *Ahaetulla prasina*. The markings on the upper side of the head, however, were unfamiliar. A more thorough examination revealed these individuals to be assignable to *Ahaetulla fasciolata*. The main differences between this species and *Ahaetulla prasina* aside from the colouration and the shorter length is the single anal plate in *Ahaetulla fasciolata*.

The snakes were collected in the province of Nakhon Si Thammarat in the south of Thailand. *Ahaetulla fasciolata* was known until now only from west Malaysia and Indonesia (Sumatra, Natuna Islands, Borneo) (Welch, 1988). In Western Malaysia it appears to be uncommon occurring in the south of the country and in Singapore (Tweedy, 1983). This new locality is all the more surprising as the known distribution is now extended some considerable distance to the north.

One of the snakes was lost, the other two were preserved and presented to the Museum of Berlin. They bear the numbers Z.M.B. 48837 and Z.M.B. 48838.

PHOLIDOSIS

Z.M.B. 48837: 227 ventrals, anal plate single, 189+1 paired subcaudals, 15 scalerows, 9 upper labials, fourth to fifth touching the eye, 1 preocular, 2 postoculars, total length 77.5 cm, tail length 27.5 cm.

Z.M.B. 48838: 229½ ventrals, anal plate single, 192+1 paired subcaudals, total length 79 cm, tail length 28 cm., the other characters are the same as for Z.M.B. 48837.

COLOURATION

Grey above with numerous, rather ill-defined cross-bars on the neck and anterior part of the body. Belly whitish with a black line running near the ends of the ventrals. A medium dark line, beginning behind the neck in one individual sharply defined, in the other rather vague. Head

grey above, punctuated with dark spots. The upper labials and underside of the head whitish with dark spots.

It is now certain that four species of *Ahaetulla* are known to exist in Thailand. These are: *Ahaetulla fasciolata*, *Ahaetulla mycterizans*, *Ahaetulla nasuta* and *Ahaetulla prasina*. They can be distinguished by the following key

DETERMINATION TABLE

- 1A. Snout with a pointed dermal appendage, extending far beyond the lower jaw, and formed from rostral shield with, rarely, small separate scales at the base, anal divided, at least one supraocular divided horizontally *Ahaetulla nasuta*
- B. Snout lacking a pointed dermal appendage, supraoculars single **2**
- 2A. Head with a pattern of black spots or dots. Colouration brown or grey, more than 211 ventrals, more than 178 subcaudals, anal usually single *Ahaetulla fasciolata*
- B. Top of head unmarked. Colouration usually green, exceptionally other colours **3**
- 3A. More than 194 ventrals, more than 151 subcaudals, in the green form belly pale green with a yellow stripe along each side, anal only exceptionally single *Ahaetulla prasina*
- B. Less than 195 ventrals, less than 156 subcaudals, in the green form belly usually white with a pair of longitudinal green lines and sometimes an additional green line along the middle, anal only exceptionally divided *Ahaetulla mycterizans*



Foto 1: Gevlekte kop van *Ahaetulla fasciolata*, spotted head; foto G. Vogel.

ABSTRACT

Ahaetulla fasciolata is reported from Thailand for the first time. A total of four *Ahaetulla*-species are known in this country, a key is given for them.

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Foto 2: Bruine jeugdkleur van *Ahaetulla prasina*, brown juvenile form; foto G. Vogel.