

A new species of pitviper of the genus *Popeia* (Squamata: Viperidae) from Pulau Tioman, Pahang, West Malaysia

L. LEE GRISMER¹, JESSE L. GRISMER^{1,2} & JIMMY A. MCGUIRE³

¹Department of Biology, La Sierra University, Riverside California 92515-8247 USA.

²Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, USA.

³Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 3101 Valley Life Science Building, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720-3160, USA.

Abstract

We describe a new species of pitviper *Popeia buniana* from Pulau Tioman, Pahang State, West Malaysia based on it having unique aspects of scalation, body proportions, and color pattern. Its long, thin body is in contrast with the shorter, more robust bodies of other arboreal pitvipers, suggesting it may be an active forager rather than an ambush feeder. Its close relationship to *P. barati* and *P. sabahi* of Sumatra and Borneo, respectively, rather than with species of the adjacent Malay Peninsula is in accord with biogeographic patterns of other flora and fauna endemic to the islands of the Outer Arc of the Seribuat Archipelago.

Key words: Arboreal, *Popeia*, *P. buniana*, *P. barati*, *P. fucata*, *P. nebularis*, *P. popeiorum*, Malaysia, Morphometrics, New species, Pulau Tioman, Seribuat Archipelago

Introduction

Pitvipers of the genus *Trimeresurus sensu lato* are nocturnal, forest-dwelling species that inhabit a wide variety of environments ranging from secondary lowland forests to primary cloud forests (Malkmus *et al.* 2002). It is the largest group of Asian pitvipers and its 40 or so species collectively range from northern India in the west, eastward through the majority of East Asia to Taiwan and the Ryukyu Archipelago, Japan; and southward through the Philippines, Thailand, West Malaysia, Borneo, and the other major islands of the Sunda Shelf (Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi and some smaller islands extending east to Timor; Gumprecht *et al.* 2004; Malkmus *et al.* 2002; Manthey & Grossmann 1997; Vogel 2006).