



## A new species of kukri snake (Colubridae: *Oligodon* Fitzinger, 1826) from the Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary, Cardamom Mountains, southwest Cambodia

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### Abstract

A new species of kukri snake *Oligodon* Fitzinger, 1826 is described from the Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary, Cardamom Mountains, southwest Cambodia. *Oligodon kampucheaensis* sp. nov. differs from other Indochinese and Southeast Asian species of *Oligodon* by having 15–15 dorsal scale rows; 164 ventral scales; 39 subcaudal scales; anal plate undivided; deep bifurcated hemipenes, lacking papillae and spines extending to subcaudal scale 11; 17 transverse cream and black-edged bands on body; three bands on tail; eight or nine scales long between dorsal bands; white ventrolateral spots on the lateral margin of every dark brown squarish or subrectangular ventral blotch. The hemipenial characters place it as the tenth species of the *O. cyclurus* group but it has a lower dorsal scale count than other species in this group. The discovery of this species from the Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary increases the number of kukri snakes for Cambodia to ten and indicates the importance of additional field studies in the Cardamom Mountains.

**Key words:** hemipenis, herpetofauna, Indochina, natural history, systematics

### Introduction

Cambodia's herpetofauna has received less attention than most other countries in tropical Southeast Asia— a region known for its rich biodiversity. Little work took place after the first major studies by Bourret (1936) and Saint Girons (1972), largely due to Cambodia's prolonged political conflict from 1975 to 1998. Only recently have field investigations, aimed at protecting and conserving the last extensive forest blocks in the biodiversity hotspots of the Cardamom Mountains and northeast Cambodia, rekindled interest in the amphibian and reptile faunas of Cambodia (see references below).

The Cardamom Mountains cover an area of approximately 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> in southwest Cambodia and include the Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary (PSWS) in the northwest near the Cambodia-Thai border, the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest in the centre, the Phnom Aural Wildlife Sanctuary in the northeast, and the southern Cardamoms Protected Areas to the south, as well as Kirirom, Bokor and Botum-Sakor National Parks (Fig. 1). The majority of these protected areas have been subject to herpetological inventories in recent years (Daltry 2002; Daltry & Momberg 2000; Daltry & Traeholt 2003; Daltry & Wüster 2002; David *et al.* 2008a; Grismer *et al.* 2007a,b, 2008a,b, 2010, 2011; Mahony 2011; Malhotra *et al.* 2011; Neang *et al.* 2010, 2011a,b; Ohler *et al.* 2002; Stuart & Emmett 2006; Stuart & Platt 2004; Wood *et al.* 2010). In northeast Cambodia, the main focus of attention has been on Seima Protected Forest in Monduliri province and Virachey National Park in Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces, where recent herpetofaunal studies were undertaken by Geissler *et al.* (2012); Stuart *et al.* (2006, 2010) and Rowley *et al.* (2010).