

NOTE ON A RARE SEA SNAKE (*THALASSOPHIS ANOMALUS*)
FROM THE COAST OF SIAM.

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WITH A PLATE.

Thalassophis anomalus, Schmidt, Abhandl. Nat. Hamb., II, p. 81, pl. iv (1852); Bouleng, Cat. Sn., III, p. 269 (1896). Wall, Monograph Sea-Snakes, p. 244 (1909).
Hydrophis anomala, Günther, Rept. Brit. Ind., p. 379 (1864); Jan, Icon. Gén. 40, pl. iv, fig. 1. (1872).

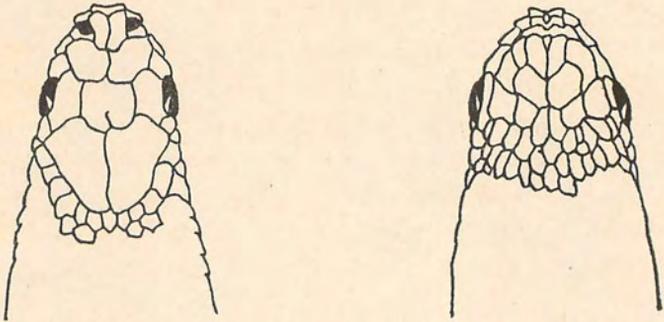
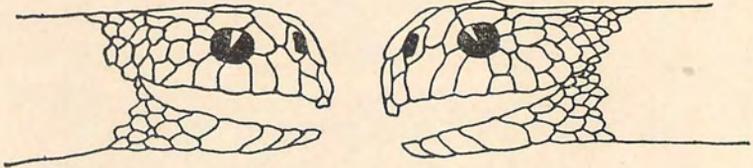
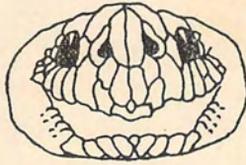
The occurrence of this snake off the coast of Siam is of considerable interest. Hitherto it has been known only from the islands of the Malayan Archipelago (Java, Sumatra, Borneo and the Moluccas) from whence some nine specimens have been obtained, all of which are distributed in the Continental Museums.

At the end of March this year, I obtained two specimens at the mouth of the Chantabun river, S. E. Siam; and later on, through an old diver living there, procured eight more. All of them were caught in the fishing baskets just within the mouth of the river.

My first two specimens agreed entirely, except in colouration, with Schmidt's description of this species, but an examination of a of a larger number showed small differences, as might have been expected. I have therefore given a description of mine in full, drawn up from the ten specimens.

Poison fangs, followed after a small interval, by 5 smaller teeth gradually diminishing in size, all of which show the presence of grooves.

Bodily configuration, moderately stout. Eye equal to or slightly less than its distance from the mouth. Rostral broken up into 4 or 5 pieces. Internasals narrow, elongate, equal to or shorter than the praefrontals. Frontal small, variable as regards length and breadth, sometimes partially or completely divided. Nostril large, lying entirely within the posterior of the two nasal shields. 1 prae- and 1 or 2 post-oculars. Temporals small, 2+3 or 3+3. Upper labials 7 to 9, usually the third, fourth and fifth entering the eye; horizontal division of the third and (or) fifth sometimes present; prae-frontal usually touches the second. Four lower labials in contact with the



THALASSOPHIS ANOMALUS.

sublinguals; posterior pair of sublinguals half the size of the anterior and separated by 2 scales. Symphisial small. 28 to 30 scales round the neck, 33 (in one 35) round the greatest diameter of the body, hexagonal, juxtaposed, with a strong tubercle or short keel. Ventrals small, equal to or a little broader than the adjacent scales, and distinguished by the presence of a double tubercle or short keel.

Colour (in life). Above, pale grey, with 32 to 36 (3 to 4 on the tail) dark cross bars, which are much broader than their interspaces, and taper to a point upon the sides. Below white. There are no annuli as in the specimens described from the Archipelago.

The one young specimen obtained differs in no way from the adults, except that the markings are more pronounced.

The scales upon the head, particularly those around the snout and lips, have unusually thickened edges, so that each one seems to stand out separately. Spirit specimens, in which the tissues have shrunk, show this peculiarity only in a small degree. Minute tubercles may, or may not be present on the head scales.

Length of the largest, a ♂, 810 mm., tail 90.

I am indebted to Mr. C. L. Groundwater, for his excellent and very faithful drawings of the head.