

A distribution update on the Bornean endemic *Trimeresurus* (*Popeia*) *sabahi* (David et al. 2011)

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Snakes' secretive nature makes it challenging to study them, maintaining a considerable lack of knowledge for most species (Dorcas and Wilson 2009). This is the case in Sundaland, a hotspot threatened by intense deforestation (Myers et al., 2000). In such a scenario, it is important to improve the distribution knowledge in order to develop effective conservation and management strategies (Dorcas and Wilson 2009).

Trimeresurus (*Popeia*) *sabahi* is a Bornean endemic submontane forest viper found from 1,000 to 1,450 meters above sea level (a.s.l.) but also found in a lowland (Das 2012; R. Inger pers. Comm. in Iskandar et al. 2013). It is known to be present in Gunung (Gn.) Kinabalu, Crocker Range, Gn. Lumaku, Mendolong, Muruk Miau, Gn. Dulit, Gn. Gading, Gn. Penrissen and Gn. Semedoem (Iskandar et al 2013). On behalf of an expedition undertaken to study small mammals in Sabah (from 25 June 2016 to 4 October 2016) two individuals of this species were recorded. The first was an adult spotted at 1,242 m a.s.l. at Gn. Trus Madi (5.5500° N, 116.5167° E), basking near the stairs at the entrance of the Kaingaran mountain trail. The second was a juvenile found at Gn. Nambuyukon (6.259861° N, 116.681583° E), 1,660 m a.s.l. It was found on a branch at 40 cm above the ground.

Taking these new records into account, the altitudinal range of the species has now been expanded from 1,450 to 1,660 m a.s.l., shifting up its altitudinal range 210 m

and proving that the species also occupies mossy montane forest. In addition, we expand its known range 25 km to the north (unpublished record in Gn. Nambuyukon) and 31 km to the Southeast within Sabah (unpublished record in Gn. Trus Madi) (Figure 2). While the population in Gn. Nambuyukon is found in a protected area (Kinabalu National Park), the one in Trus Madi is under the jurisdiction of the forestry department. This record highlights the importance of this forest reserve to the conservation of unique montane endemics.



Figure 1. Juvenile of *Trimeresurus* (*Popeia*) *sabahi* in Gn. Nambuyukon.

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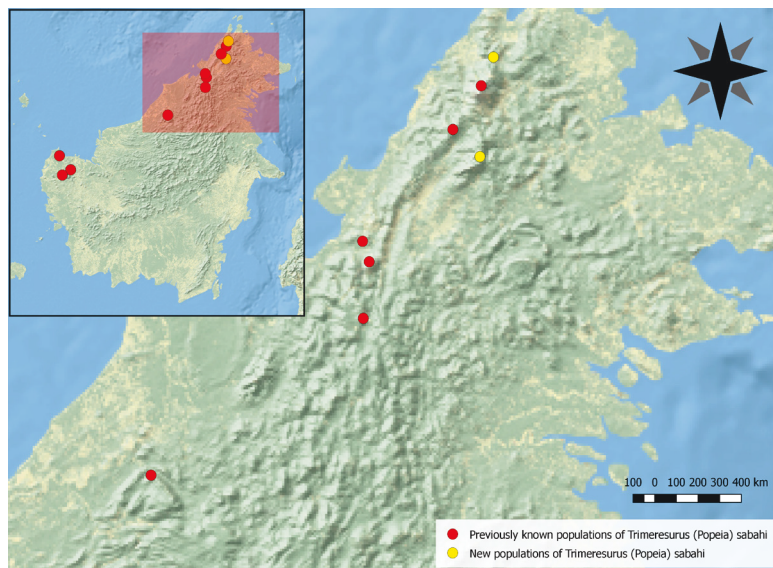


Figure 2. Updated distribution range of *Trimeresurus (Popeia) sabahi*.

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