



The Sarawak Museum Journal

Vol. XLIV No. 65

December 1993



ISSN: 0375-3050

E-ISSN: 3036-0188

Citation: Indraneil Das. (1993). Vernacular Names of Some Southeast Asian Amphibians and Reptiles. The Sarawak Museum Journal, XLIV (65): 123-140

VERNACULAR NAMES OF SOME SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Indraneil Das

(Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam)

INTRODUCTION

The rich herpetofauna of southeast Asia, composed of many hundred species of frogs, toads, caecilians (pronounced "Sicilians"), crocodiles, turtles, tortoises, lizards and snakes, remains grossly understudied. While collecting data on the ecology and distribution of the amphibians and reptiles of southeast Asia in general and that of Brunei Darussalam in particular, it occurred to me that a list of local names of these organisms, along with their meanings, would be useful to local naturalists, the lay people, and particularly medics who may have to treat victims of bites of unknown and long-gone snakes, with only the vernacular names to help in their identification.

The list is derived from literature (listed in the references section), as well as from locals in several southeast Asian countries I interviewed, and generally covers the Indo-Malaysia region, excluding Myanmar and Thailand and include West (peninsular) and East (Sarawak and Sabah) Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. For each species, I have provided an English name, the current scientific name, authority and date, followed by the language, vernacular name, and its meaning in English, if known. This list is obviously not exhaustive. A total of 382 names, 41 for amphibians and 341 for reptiles have been presented, representing 26 amphibian and 126 reptile species. Some species have more than one name even in the same locality. On the other hand, the same name may sometimes be applied to several species that are usually similar in morphology and/or colouration, at the same locality, or at different localities. I have ignored minor dialect differences. The English derivations of the vernacular have been obtained mostly through colleagues (listed in 'Acknowledgements') and from Richards (1988). Kiew (1984) has provided English and Malay common names for all Malaysian amphibian species then known, and I have refrained from relisting these in the present paper. I welcome comments from readers on any errors and major omissions in the list.



VERNACULAR NAMES OF SOME SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

by

Indraneil Das

(Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam)

Introduction

The rich herpetofauna of southeast Asia, composed of many hundred species of frogs, toads, caecilians (pronounced "Sicilians"), crocodiles, turtles, tortoises, lizards and snakes, remains grossly understudied. While collecting data on the ecology and distribution of the amphibians and reptiles of southeast Asia in general and that of Brunei Darussalam in particular, it occurred to me that a list of local names of these organisms, along with their meanings, would be useful to local naturalists, the lay people, and particularly medics who may have to treat victims of bites of unknown and long-gone snakes, with only the vernacular names to help in their identification.

The list is derived from literature (listed in the references section), as well as from locals in several southeast Asian countries I interviewed, and generally covers the Indo-Malaysia region, excluding Myanmar and Thailand and include West (peninsular) and East (Sarawak and Sabah) Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. For each species, I have provided an English name, the current scientific name, authority and date, followed by the language, vernacular name, and its meaning in English, if known. This list is obviously not exhaustive. A total of 382 names, 41 for amphibians and 341 for reptiles have been presented, representing 26 amphibian and 126 reptile species. Some species have more than one name even in the same locality. On the other hand, the same name may sometimes be applied to several species that are usually similar in morphology and/or colouration, at the same locality, or at different localities. I have ignored minor dialect differences. The English derivations of the vernacular have been obtained mostly through colleagues (listed in 'Acknowledgements') and from Richards (1988). Kiew (1984) has provided English and Malay common names for all Malaysian amphibian species then known, and I have refrained from relisting these in the present paper. I welcome comments from readers on any errors and major omissions in the list.

In Bahasa Melayu or Malay, the principal language spoken in the region, the generic name usually precedes the specific name. A short listing of these have been appended below in Table 1:

Table 1

Group	Malay generic name
Frog/Toad	Katak
Crocodile	Buaya
Sea Turtle	Penyu
Hardshell Turtle	Kura-kura

Table 1 (cont.)

Group	Malay generic name
Softshell Turtle	Labi-labi
Skink	Balingkarong/Bengkarong
Monitor	Biawak
Gecko	Cicak
Snake	Ular

FROGS AND TOADS

1. Kinabalu stream toad *Ansonia hanitschi* Inger, 1960
Malay (Sabah) *Tahak-kahak* (vernacular derived from call)
2. Long-fingered stream toad *Ansonia longidigita* Inger, 1960
Iban *Pangtong* (= ?)
3. Malayan giant toad *Bufo asper* Gravenhorst, 1829
Bahasa Indonesia *Bangkong besar* (= big croaker)
4. Giant river toad *Bufo juxtasper* Inger, 1964
Malay (Sabah) *Katak puru* (= warty toad), Kadazan *Buhangkut/ Buangkut* (= ?)
5. Common Asian toad *Bufo melanostictus* Schneider, 1799
Bahasa Indonesia *Bangkong biasa* (= common croaker), Malay (Malaysia) *Katak puru* (= warty toad)
6. Brown bullfrog *Kaloula baleata* (Müller, 1836)
Malay (Sabah) *Katak kembong* (= inflated frog), Kadazan *Podtung* (= ?)
7. Banded bullfrog *Kaloula pulchra* Gray, 1831
Malay (Sabah) *Katak kembong* (= inflated frog), Kadazan *Podtung* (= ?), Malay (Malaysia) *Katak kuak* (= ?)
8. Kinabalu horned toad *Megophrys baluensis* (Boulenger, 1899)
Malay (Sabah) *Katak bertanduk* (= horned frog), Takang (= ?)
9. Bornean horned toad *Megophrys nasuta* (Schlegel, 1858)
Malay (Sabah and Malaysia) *Katak bertanduk* (= horned frog), Takang (= ?)