



A Cyan-Blue Bamboo Pitviper (*Trimeresurus stejnegeri stejnegeri*) in Taiwan

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The Bamboo Pitviper, *Trimeresurus stejnegeri stejnegeri* (Schmidt 1925), also known as the Green Tree Pitviper or the Red-tailed Bamboo Viper, is distributed across Taiwan, southern China, northern Thailand, and northern Vietnam (Castellano et al. 1994). Dorsal coloration can be variable but typically is some shade of green (lime green, ivy green, or chartreuse) with a white ventrolateral stripe, which usually has red

margins in most males; however, some individuals have dark green bands or white spots all over the dorsum (Norval et al. 2015). Bamboo Pitvipers occur in a variety of habitats in lowland to montane forests, often near water (Norval et al. 2015).

At about 2030 h on 23 January 2023 (temperature 15 °C), we encountered a cyan-blue Bamboo Pitviper (total length ~45 cm) (Fig. 1) among short grass near a small stream



Figure 1. Comparisons of a cyan-blue morph (left) from central Taiwan and typical green Bamboo Pitvipers (*Trimeresurus stejnegeri*) (right) from Taichung City, Taiwan: (A & B) dorsum, and (C & D) venter. Photographs by Kuang-Ting Chen (A) and You-Jia Tu (B–D).



Figure 1 (continued). Comparisons of a cyan-blue morph (left) from central Taiwan and typical green Bamboo Pitvipers (*Trimeresurus stejnegeri*) (right) from Taichung City and Nantou County, Taiwan: (E & F) lateral view of the head, and (G & H) tail. Photographs by You-Jia Tu.

in the lowland forest of central Taiwan (24.2441, 120.8719; elev. 450 m asl). In Taiwan, low-elevation forest patches frequently accommodate a variety of small-scale agricultural activities. The site where we encountered this snake was surrounded by a bamboo farm, a pear orchard, and broadleaf secondary forest. This specimen had a cyan-blue dorsum with dark crossbands along the entire body and mottled green and blue spots on its face and venter. The white ventrolateral stripe was continuous but the red border was intermittent.

Color variation is common in many species of *Trimeresurus*, including *T. purpureomaculatus* (Chan et al. 2022) and *T. insularis*, in which blue individuals tend to be uniformly colored and lack green altogether (Jones et al. 2019). However, color variation in *T. s. stejnegeri* has not been adequately characterized. In Taiwan, white (albino), yellow, blue, and brown individuals have been observed (Norval et al. 2015), whereas the snake described was predominantly cyan-blue but, unlike blue *T. insularis*, had completely or par-

tially green scales on the face and venter. This record adds to a growing body of literature documenting the vast color variation in Asian pitvipers.

Literature Cited

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