

## Note on the Variability of the Orange-necked Keelback *Macropisthodon flaviceps* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854) in Southern Thailand

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In April 2008, a specimen of a snake in the genus *Macropisthodon* was collected from a small stream at Huay – Danmeeh in Trang Province, Thailand. The specimen differed in body colour from *Macropisthodon flaviceps* shown in *The Serpents of Thailand and Adjacent Waters* by Edward H. Taylor, in *The Snakes of Thailand and Their Husbandry* by Merel J. Cox. and on web sites such as [www.ecologyasia.com/verts/snakes/orange-necked\\_keelback.htm](http://www.ecologyasia.com/verts/snakes/orange-necked_keelback.htm) and [www.tigr.org/reptiles/species.php?genus=Macropisthodon&species=flaviceps](http://www.tigr.org/reptiles/species.php?genus=Macropisthodon&species=flaviceps)

The description of *Macropisthodon flaviceps* given by Edward H. Taylor, 1965 is as follows: “Maxillary teeth 18-20 +2 enlarged fangs, internasal shorter than prefrontals, frontal a little longer than broad, a little shorter than its distance from end of snout, shorter than parietals; one preocular; three or four post oculars; temporal, 2+2 or 2+3; eight supralabials, fourth and fifth entering eye; five or six infralabials in contact with anterior chinshields; posterior chinshields longer than anterior. Scales keeled, in 19 rows. Ventrals, 120-138; anal, divided; subcaudals, 49-60. Total length 840 mm.; tail 190 mm. Body black; young with greyish-white or pale olive cross bars, at least trace persist in the adult; a broad

orange band across nape, sometimes disappearing in adult, separated from head, which is yellowish-brown or olive, by a broad black band; venter olive, with black cross bands, or entirely black.”

Merel J. Cox (1991) describes the body colour as follows: “... head is light brown and distinct from the neck. A distinctive, black-edged, orange band encircles the neck. The body is black with indistinct light cross-bands that narrow near to the vertebral ridge but widen laterally. The ventral surface is either black or dark green with black bands.”

The specimen was examined and described as follows (Table 1): Head distinct from the neck; rostral about twice as broad as high, part visible above about one third in width; anterior nasal sub-equal posterior nasal; internasal length about three-fourths of the width, sub-equal prefrontal in length and width; frontal truncate anteriorly, width two thirds of the length, latter straight and the sides rather parallel, its length greater by two thirds than the distance to tip of snout, three-fourths of parietals length; nasal seemingly completely divided, anterior part largest; loreal approximately as high as long, or a little higher.

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**Figure 1.** Head of *Macropisthodon flaviceps* from Trang.



**Figure 2.** Body colour of *Macropisthodon flaviceps* from Trang.

**Table 1.** Data of *Macropisthodon flaviceps*.

Configurations	mm.
Total length	705.0
Tail	123.0
Width of head	20.0
Length of head	31.5
Supralabials	8
Infralabials	9
Temporals (L,R)	12
Ventrals	132
Subcaudals	51
Maxillary teeth+enlarged fangs	18+2

One preocular; three postoculars; two anterior temporals; three posterior temporals; eight supralabials; fourth and fifth entering eye; nine infralabials; five lower labials in contact with anterior chin shields; posterior chin shields longer than anterior.

Scales are arranged in rows of 19 at mid-body and are strongly keeled, ventrals, 132, subcaudals divided, 51.

Maxillary teeth, 18+2 enlarged fangs.

Body black: neck and head reddish-brown, the scales have a black keel, there is a dark band on the neck, shown in figure 1 and 2.

The Orange-necked Keelback *Macropisthodon flaviceps* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854), has a geographical distribution including the Malay Peninsula, Southern Thailand, Sumatra, Western Indonesia and Borneo.

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