Hydrophis

For further details, link

Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Elapidae

Genus: Hydrophis

Habit and habitat

Diet: They feed on small fish and eels.

Activity: Many species are active both during the day and at night.

Locomotion:

They swim through lateral undulation of their flattened bodies. In advanced forms, the absence of well-developed ventral scales means they are essentially helpless on land

Marine Environment: Hydrophis species are predominantly marine, found in warm, tropical waters.

Specific Locations: They typically inhabit coastal areas with:

- Coral reefs
- Estuaries

Characteristics

- When swimming, a keel is formed along part of the belly, increasing surface area and aiding propulsion, which occurs by lateral undulation.
- Hydrophis fasciatus has a small head, long body and is slender anteriorly. The scales on thickest part of body are sub quadrangular or hexagonal in shape, juxtaposed or slightly imbricate. It has 5-6 maxillary (upper jaw bone) teeth behind fangs and 2 anterior temporals.
- Body scales in 28-33 rows around the neck, 47-58 around midbody (increase in number of rows from neck to midbody 20–27); ventral scales 414-514 (average 460).
- Anterior part of body including head and neck dark olive to black with pale oval yellowish spots on sides, sometimes connected as crossbars, posterior, grayish, below whitish, dark rhomboidal spots may extend down the sides of the body and form complete annuli in young.
- As with "true" sea snakes is piscivorous, feeding primarily on the numerous fish species that are known to dwell in Taal Lake's murky waters.
- This species is characterized by a wide variation in number of ventral scales and degree of parietal scale fragmentation.
- Both sexes possess spiny scales along their bodies but males have more highly developed spines. This sexual dimorphism in spines may play a role in courtship or in locomotion by reducing drag.
- Sensing water motion is useful in locating prey, predators, or potential mates and has been demonstrated in other aquatic animals (e.g. lateral line in fish, whiskers in harbour seals).