

## Bevel-Nosed Boas

**Bevel-nosed boas have narrow heads, long prehensile tails and a variable pattern.**

*By Mark O'Shea*

Distribution: Eastern Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Bismarck Archipelago.

Habitat: Coconut plantations and rainforests.

Diet: Lizards and frogs.

Max.length: 0.5-0.6m SVL (0.6-0.7m TL).

Reproductive strategy: Viviparous with 4-6 neonates.

It has been problematic determining what common name to use for *Candoia carinata*. Specimens that occur in sympatry with the stout New Guinea ground boa *C.aspera*, as they do on Karkar Island, tend to be slender and arboreal while those occurring in areas from which *C.aspera* are absent seem to be more stout-bodied and terrestrial. This led to me referring to the slender *C.carinata carinata* as Pacific tree boas and the stout *C.c.paulsoni* as Pacific ground boas in my book on the snakes of PNG. A recent taxonomic revision may have helped solve the problem in some respects but may also have made it more complex by introducing a new moniker, bevelnosed boa (see below).

Confining my comments to the Karkar specimens, these are very slender little snakes which were referred to by Sam McDowell as 'long-tailed *C.carinata*'. They have narrow heads, long prehensile tails and a variable pattern which differs not only from specimens to specimen but may even vary in a single individual as it changes shade depending on the environmental conditions. Most specimens are blotched or striped but a common characteristic of the New Guinea specimens is the presence of a large pale saddle marking over the back of the snake in the cloacal region. Females lack cloacal spurs in New Guinea and Karkar populations.

Taxonomic note: The recent revision of the *Candoia carinata* complex, which basically recognized the various populations defined by Sam McDowell, has elevated its two subspecies to full species status and defined eight subspecies between them. In addition a third species, with two subspecies has been described. The form occurring on Karkar Island is the nominate *Candoia carinata carinata*.

All taxa are summarized below:

*C.carinata* (Schneider's bevelnosed boa) from eastern Indonesia, New Guinea & Bismarcks.  
*C.carinata carinata* (Western Schneider's bevelnosed boa) from east Indonesia & New Guinea.  
*C.carinata tepedeleni* (Tepedelen's bevelnosed boa) from Bismarck Archipelago.  
*C.paulsoni* (Paulson's bevelnosed boa) from eastern Indonesia, New Guinea & Solomons.  
*C.paulsoni paulsoni* (Solomon bevelnosed boa) from Solomon Islands, excl. Bougainville.  
*C.paulsoni mcdowellii* (McDowell's bevelnosed boa) from PNG & Louisiade Archipelago.  
*C.paulsoni rosadoi* (Rosado's bevelnosed boa) from Misima Island, Louisiade Archipelago.  
*C.paulsoni sadlieri* (Sadlier's bevelnosed boa) from Woodlark Island, Louisiade Archipelago.  
*C.paulsoni tasmai* (Tasma's bevelnosed boa) Halmahera & northeastern Sulawesi, Indonesia.  
*C.paulsoni vindumi* (Vindum's bevelnosed boa) from Bougainville & Buka.  
*C.superciliosa* (Belau bevelnosed boa) from Palau Archipelago.  
*C.superciliosa superciliosa* (Northern Belau bevelnosed boa) from Babeldaob to Beliliou.  
*C.superciliosa crombei* (Ngeaur bevelnosed boa) from Ngeaur, southern Palau.

The other species in *Candoia* are *Candoia aspera*, from New Guinea, with two subspecies (*C.a.aspera* and *C.a.schmidti*), and *C.bibroni*, from Samoa to the Solomons, also with two subspecies (*C.b.bibroni* and *C.b.australis*).

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