

Thanh xa ky lan, a unique snake species with horns growing from its nose in Vietnam

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The garter snake lives mainly in subtropical rainforests at elevations of 300 to 1,100 m, especially in valleys with streams. It is usually arboreal and mainly active during the day, preying on small mice & other rodents, birds and perhaps other vertebrates. Its mating season is from April to May and can produce 5 to 10 eggs in a clutch. After 60 days of incubation, the hatchlings are 30–35 cm long, brownish-grey with dark edges on some of the dorsal scales. As adults, the garter snake turns steel-grey at about 12–14 months of age, then turns blue-green or green as an adult at about 24 months of age. However, a few individuals remain steel-grey as subadults and do not progress to the usual adult coloration. Research conducted by Bangor University has suggested that the nasal protrusion is used for mating behaviour where males can 'block' rivals, but this still needs further research.

The scientific name of the unicorn snake is *Gonyosoma bourlengeri* and is also known as the elephant snake or trunk snake.



This snake species has a scary appearance but they are very gentle and can be kept as pets.



The most recognizable feature of the unicorn snake is the sharp horn at the tip of its nose. This horn is a small mass of flesh and its main function is to attract prey. Specifically, when the snake is on a high tree branch, the horn will act as a green worm to attract birds to hunt and then it will become the snake's meal.



As soon as they hatch, baby unicorns have horns on the tip of their noses.

The unicorn snake is a non-venomous snake. Its food is small vertebrates such as birds, mice, frogs, etc.



The unicorn snake is mainly distributed in Northern Vietnam, however, people have also discovered the snake appearing in the forest area of ??Deo Ca range (Phu Yen).

In Vietnam, the unicorn snake is also associated with a story about a crested snake that is believed to be a divine snake, often guarding temples. This snake never bites people but everyone is afraid of it.





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