

A twin-barred gliding snake's failed attempt to prey on gecko

Subjects: Twin-barred gliding snake, *Chrysopelea pelias* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae).
Spotted house gecko, *Gekko monarchus* (Reptilia: Sauria: Gekkonidae).

Subjects identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Nee Soon swamp-forest; 7 September 2008; 1228-1231 hrs.

Habitat: Concrete pipeline along grassy trail bordered by secondary forest.

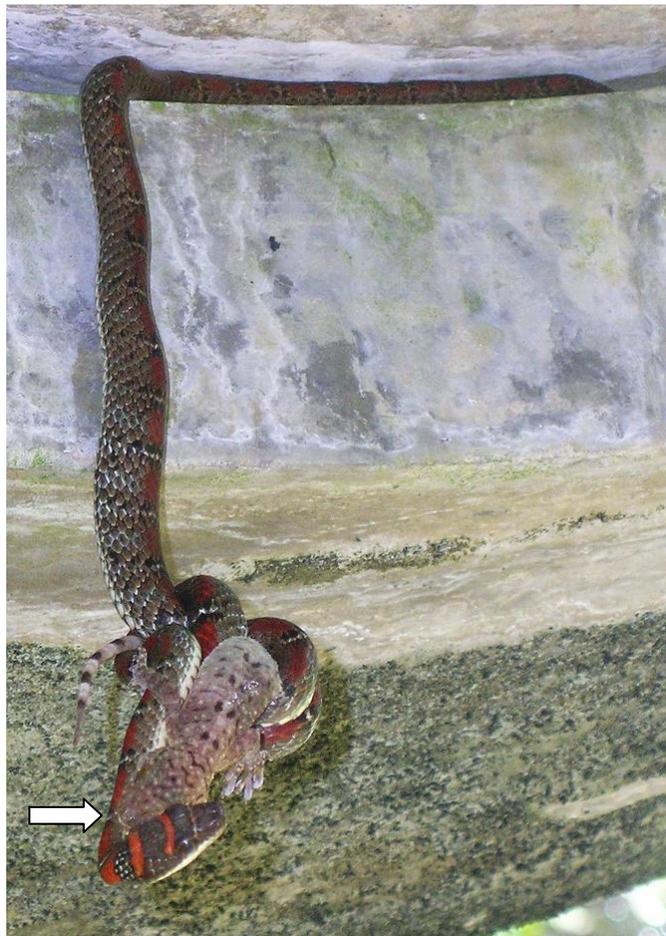
Observer: Tan Siong Kiat.

Observation: A twin-barred gliding snake of about 60 cm total length was observed suspended under the concrete structure and constricting a spotted house gecko (about 10 cm total length), having thrown two coils of its body around the posterior torso of the lizard. The gecko had clamped its jaws firmly on the side of the snake's neck (indicated by white arrow in the picture). This standoff lasted for about 10 minutes until the snake loosened its coils, and thus enabled the gecko to escape.

Remarks: In a similar observation involving the same species of predator and prey at the same location, the snake succeeded in killing and ingesting its prey (Tan, 2014). In another observation by Leong & Foo (2009), the snake had killed the gecko but abandoned it possibly due to the prey's relatively large size. In the event featured here, the coils of the snake did not reach the thoracic part of the gecko's body. The prey was able to breathe and fight back. Having been gripped on the side of the neck, the snake was prevented from biting the gecko, and thus failed to incapacitate its prey by envenomation. In all three observations, the snakes had dealt with their prey with the anterior part of their bodies dangling downwards.

References:

Leong T. M. & S. K. Foo, 2009. Attempted predation on a large gecko by a twin-barred tree snake, *Chrysopelea pelias* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae). *Nature in Singapore*. 2: 311-316.
Tan S. K., 2014. Twin-barred gliding snake preying on spotted house gecko. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 70.



Photograph by Tan Siong Kiat

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