

Malayan water monitor preying on changeable lizard

Subjects: Malayan water monitor, *Varanus salvator* (Reptilia: Sauria: Varanidae);
Changeable lizard, *Calotes versicolor* (Reptilia: Sauria: Agamidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, along Jalan Ubin; 4 December 2015; 1501 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest and parkland.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: A juvenile Malayan water monitor of about 50 cm total length was seen in the middle of a small open grass patch with the tail of a changeable lizard protruding from its mouth (see accompanying picture). The water monitor appeared to be moving slowly and made little attempt to further swallow the prey. It is not known if the monitor had caught a live changeable lizard or scavenged on an already dead one. Also unclear is whether an entire changeable lizard was being consumed, or if it was just partial remains of one. The monitor then walked into thick vegetation and out of view.

Remarks: Malayan water monitors are known to feed on small animals and fish. They also scavenge on carrion as well as kitchen waste (Baker & Lim, 2012). This observation shows a native lizard feeding on a non-native one. Water monitors are opportunistic hunters, and the abundance of changeable lizards on Pulau Ubin (personal observations) are likely to result in frequent predation events.

Reference: Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2012. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Updated edition. Draco Publishing and Distribution Pte. Ltd. & Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.



Photo by Goh Chin Seng

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