

## Probable predation of crab-eating water snake by common palm civet

**Subjects:** Common palm civet, *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Viverridae).  
Crab-eating water snake, *Fordonia leucobalia* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Homalopsidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Natalia Huang

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Pasir Ris Park, mangrove forest boardwalk; 6 September 2014; 2205 hrs.

**Habitat:** Mangrove forest.

**Observers:** Natalia Huang, Paige Lee & Anya Adhyantha.

**Observation:** A female common palm civet was observed on a branch approximately 3 m above the ground prodding the carcass of a crab-eating water snake of about 60 cm total length, presumably in an attempt to feed on it (Fig. 1). Apparently disturbed by the observers and their torch-lights, the civet moved away from the observers' view. The snake, left on the branch, had been torn open with its innards exposed (Fig. 2).

**Remarks:** The common palm civet is known to be omnivorous (Baker & Lim, 2012: 152). It feeds mainly on fruits, showing a preference for fishtail palm and mangoes, and sometimes eating worms and insects (EcologyAsia, 2014). The common palm civet seems capable of killing and eating small snakes. Although the frequency of such predation events is unknown and apparently not documented, the remains of a blind snake (*Ramphotyphlops* sp.) had been discovered in the faeces of a common palm civet (Xu Weiting, personal communication).

The crab-eating water snake is semi-aquatic (Baker & Lim, 2012: 110) and does not climb trees. For it to reach 3 m above the ground, the snake has to be physically carried up to the spot. In the featured scenario, it is not clear if the snake was killed by the civet and then brought up to the branch to be eaten, or if the civet had chanced upon the snake which had already been dispatched and then abandoned by another predator.

### References:

- 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. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- EcologyAsia, 2014. [http://www.ecologyasia.com/verts/mammals/common\\_palm\\_civet.htm](http://www.ecologyasia.com/verts/mammals/common_palm_civet.htm). Accessed 11th September 2014.

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Fig. 1. Common palm civet on a branch with the carcass of a snake (obscured by vegetation) in front of it.



Fig. 2. Image of the same area moments later, zoomed in and with the photographer having moved slightly to the right. The civet had disappeared, but the snake carcass (indicated by arrow) is left dangling on the tree branch.

Photographs by Natalia Huang