

## Clouded monitor lizard eating snail

**Subjects:** Clouded monitor, *Varanus nebulosus* (Reptilia: Sauria: Varanidae);  
Land snail, *Hemiplecta humphreysiana* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Ariophantidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Contributor & Kelvin K. P. Lim.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, main road close to summit; 1 May 2014; 1434 hrs.

**Habitat:** Primary rainforest, on the ground at the side of a metaled road.

**Observer:** Contributor.

**Observation:** A clouded monitor of about 90 cm total length was observed on the forest floor holding a snail (of about 4 cm shell diameter) in its mouth (see accompanying photograph). The snail was crunched up and swallowed.

**Remarks:** Clouded monitors find much of their food by rooting the ground. They are known to feed on snails, as well as other invertebrates including beetles, grubs, orthopterans, scorpions, and ants. Small prey such as ants are apparently collected by licking them up with the tongue. Invertebrate prey are taken in enormous quantities while vertebrate prey such as frogs, fish, lizards, snakes and small mammals appear to be comparatively rare (Bennett, 1998: 137). The snail, *Hemiplecta humphreysiana* is a large species (shell width to 50 mm) that is native to Singapore, and is restricted to forests (Tan et al., 2012: 113).

### References:

- Bennett, D., 1998. *Monitor Lizards. Natural history, biology & husbandry*. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main. 352 pp.
- Tan S. K., S. Y. Chan & G. R. Clements, 2012. *A Guide to Snails and other Non-marine Molluscs of Singapore*. Singapore Science Centre. 176 pp.



Photograph by Uwe Will

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