

Painted bronzeback attacking a four-lined tree frog

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Subjects: Painted bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis pictus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae);
Four-lined tree frog, *Polypedates leucomystax* (Amphibia: Anura: Rhacophoridae).

Subjects identified by: Noel Thomas.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, Bukit Surau; 26 September 2017; 1214 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observer: Zhang Xucheng.

Observation: A painted bronzeback snake of about 1 m total length was spotted slithering across an earth trail, in pursuit of a four-lined tree frog. As the frog's movement was slowed when it entered the leaf litter, the snake caught up with it. The snake bit and held onto the right side of the frog (see accompanying picture, arrow points to the heads of both snake and frog) which then emitted a series of loud, squeaky distress calls (refer to sound clip recorded by Zhang Xucheng attached). As the observer had to leave the scene, it is not known if the snake was successful in subduing and eventually consuming the frog.

Remarks: The painted bronzeback is a diurnal and arboreal snake which feeds largely on lizards and frogs (Baker & Lim, 2012: 101). While the four-lined tree frog is nocturnal, it is likely to have been surprised into activity in the daytime by the snake which was presumably hunting, and had located it. Its probable initial escape led to the pursuit featured here. The authors have observed that when the arboreal bronzeback is hunting on the ground, it tends to periodically elevate the anterior part of its body in a 'periscoping' manner to locate prey by sight.

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 & Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.



Photograph by Zhang Xucheng