

## Malayan water monitor preying on dog-faced water snake

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**Subjects:** Malayan water monitor, *Varanus salvator* (Reptilia: Squamata: Varanidae);  
Dog-faced water snake, *Cerberus schneiderii* (Reptilia: Squamata: Homalopsidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Heng Yirui, Hsu Chia-Da and Craig Justin Tan.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, at north-eastern tip of Migratory Bird Trail; 2 December 2019; around 0900 hrs.

**Habitat:** Estuarine shore, on rocky coastal breakwater flanked by mangrove forest.

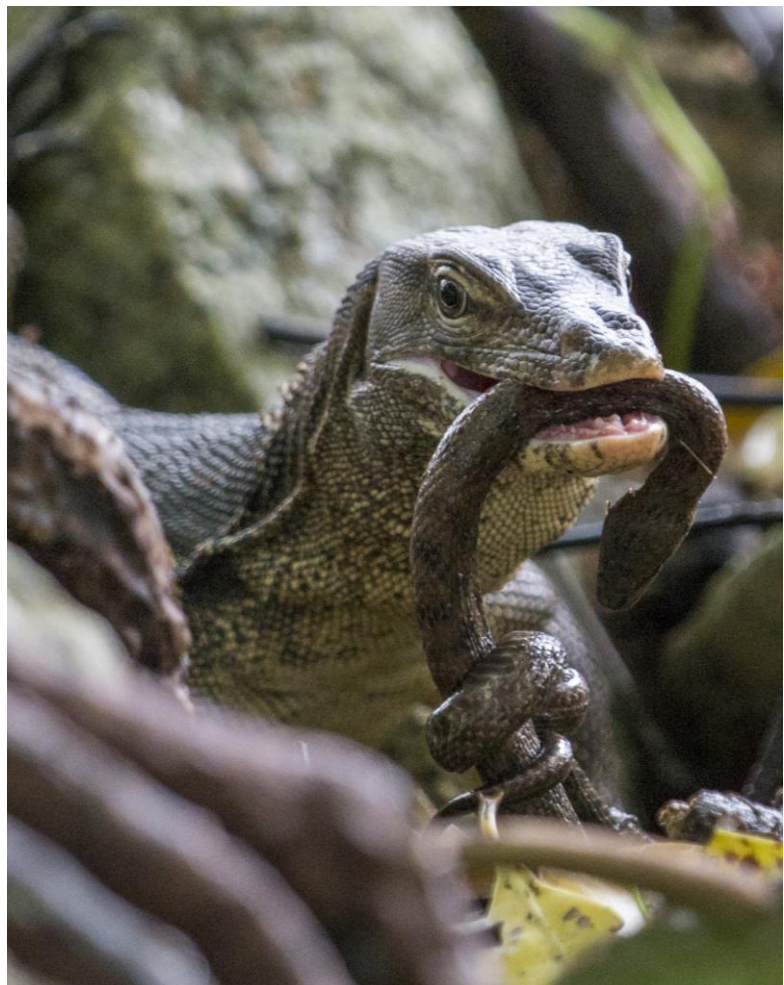
**Observers:** Heng Yirui, Hsu Chia-Da and Craig Justin Tan.

**Observation:** A juvenile monitor lizard of about 90 cm total length was spotted with a live dog-faced water snake that it had just caught. The lizard held the mid-body of the snake in its mouth and rubbed it against the rocks. The snake, which had part of its body coiled around the lizard's snout, repeatedly bit the lizard's head, but this seemed not to affect the lizard. After around fifteen minutes, the snake appeared to have succumbed to its injuries. The lizard then repositioned the snake in its mouth (see accompanying picture), and swallowed it head first.

**Remarks:** The Malayan water monitor is not known to be choosy about its diet. It feeds on small animals and fish, and is also known to be a scavenger of carrion and kitchen waste, (Baker & Lim, 2012: 89). In Singapore, one was found swallowing a changeable lizard (Thomas et al., 2016), and another was observed struggling to devour a live octopus (Chiok, 2019). The featured observation shows that it will also eat snakes.

### References:

- Baker N & Lim KKP (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.
- Chiok WX (2019) Attempted predation on an octopus by a Malayan water monitor lizard. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2019: 40-41.
- Thomas N, Goh CS, Lin J & Ang G (2016) Malayan water monitor preying on changeable lizard. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2016: 8.



Photograph by Heng Yirui