

Biodiversity Record: Predation of rat by equatorial spitting cobra at Berlayer Creek

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Subjects: Equatorial spitting cobra, *Naja sumatrana* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae);
Oriental house rat, *Rattus tanezumi* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Muridae).

Subjects identified by: Choo Ruisheng and Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Berlayer Creek mangroves; 12 October 2021; 1110–1136 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove. On leaf litter beside the boardwalk abutting the creek.

Observer: Choo Ruisheng.

Observation: A cobra of about 1 m total length was observed less than 50 cm away from the boardwalk, exposed on the leaf litter with a half-swallowed rat in its mouth (Fig. 1). While consuming the rat, the snake occasionally rolled its body and pulled backwards. The lower jaw appeared to be fully extended (Fig. 2) to accommodate the prey, which might have proved a little too large for the snake to easily manage. The rat had not been swallowed much further when the observer left the scene after about 15 minutes. The snake did not seem disturbed during its attempt to consume its prey, even as multiple passers-by stopped to look at it during the period of observation.



Fig. 1. Equatorial spitting cobra observed with a half-swallowed Oriental house rat. (Photograph by: Choo Ruisheng).

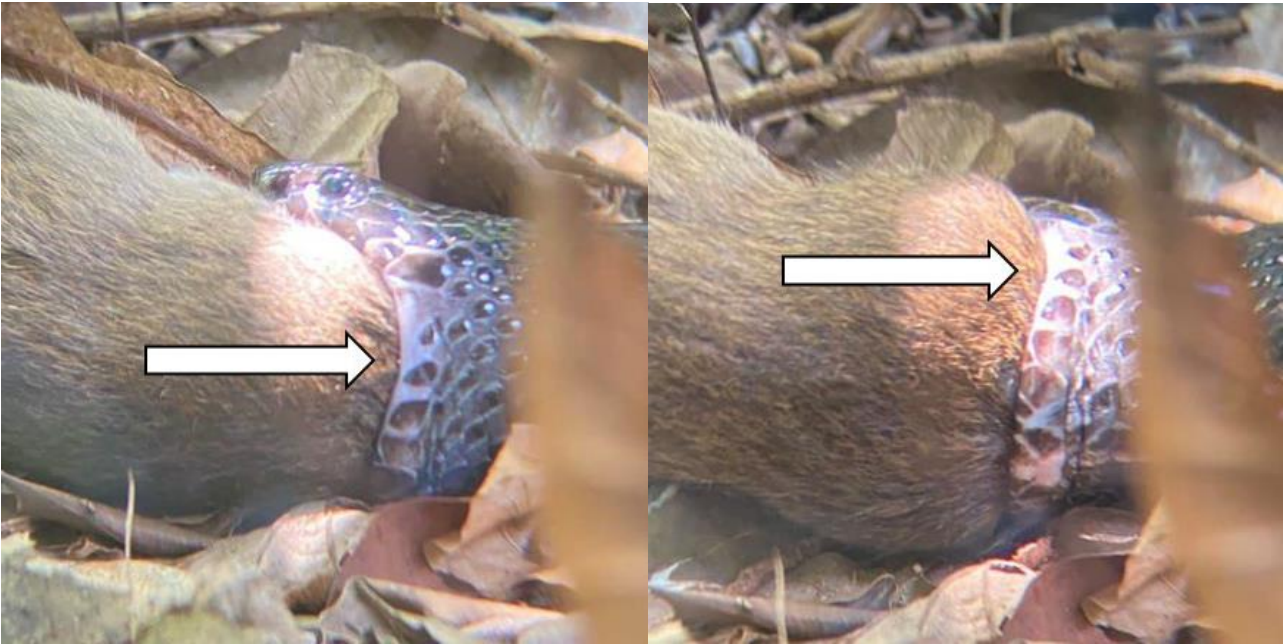


Fig. 2. Equatorial spitting cobra stretching its lower jaw (indicated by arrows) to accommodate the prey in its mouth. (Photographs by: Choo Ruisheng).

Remarks: The equatorial spitting cobra is a relatively common species of snake in Singapore that can sometimes be observed in urban settings (Baker & Lim, 2012). The individual was observed to be actively feeding during the day, suggesting diurnal habits.

Literature cited:

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., Singapore, 180 pp.