

Biodiversity Record: Apparent predation of changeable lizard by juvenile water monitor

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Subjects: Malayan water monitor, *Varanus salvator macromaculatus* (Reptilia, Squamata, Varanidae);
Changeable lizard, *Calotes versicolor* (Reptilia, Squamata, Agamidae).

Subjects identified by: Chen Xuanhe and Odelia Tam.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Pasir Ris Park, near entrance of mangrove boardwalk; 1 April 2023, 1436 hrs.

Habitat: Open patch of grass between mangrove forest and parkland.

Observers: Chen Xuanhe and Odelia Tam.

Observation: A juvenile Asian water monitor of about 30 cm total length was spotted biting onto the neck of a changeable lizard for around two minutes. The changeable lizard was struggling at first, but stopped moving when it began bleeding at the neck (Fig. 1) It is unclear whether the changeable lizard was consumed as the monitor lizard had dragged it into thick vegetation nearby.



Fig. 1. Juvenile water monitor with its jaws clamped on the neck of the changeable lizard and dragging it away. (Photograph by: Chen Xuanhe).

Remarks: A very similar event involving the same species of lizards was recorded in an urban setting by Chan & Lau (2023). As what happened before and after the sighting were not observed, it is unclear if the monitor lizard had actually chased down and caught the changeable lizard, and if the monitor lizard had managed to ingest the changeable lizard later. Nevertheless, these observations show that the changeable lizard is on the menu of juvenile Malayan water monitors.

Literature cited:

Chan S-Y & Lau WL (2023) Biodiversity Record: Predation of an adult changeable lizard by a juvenile water monitor. Nature in Singapore, 16: e2023022.