

Paradise gliding snake eating house gecko

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Subjects: Paradise gliding snake, *Chrysopelea paradisi* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae);
Spiny-tailed house gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkonidae).

Subjects identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Labrador Park; 23 October 2018; around 1000 hrs.

Habitat: Coastal parkland.

Observer: Morgany d/o Thangavelu.

Observation: A rustling sound led the observer to a paradise gliding snake of about 1 m total length sliding down a tree trunk and heading towards a house gecko of about 12 cm total length. The snake caught the gecko by the head in its jaws and threw a coil of its body around the rear part of the lizard. Somehow, the gecko managed to bite the snake on the side of its neck and held on tenaciously (Fig. 1-6). Despite twisting and turning its head around, and even releasing the gecko from its coils, the snake could not manoeuvre the prey to a position in which it could be swallowed (Fig. 3-6). Eventually, after about two minutes, the gecko lost hold of the snake's neck. With the lizard's head wholly in its mouth, the snake was able to swallow its prey entirely (Fig. 7-9).

Remarks: The paradise gliding snake is common in Singapore and can be found in urban areas (see Tan, 2014). Lizards and small birds are preyed on by this diurnal species (Baker & Lim, 2012: 97). It also feeds on small bats which are extricated from their roost inside bamboo stems (Chan & D'Rozario, 2013).

The featured observation shows a successful attempt at subduing prey. However, the defensive action of the gecko by latching firmly on to the side of the predator's neck has been known to save its life. Tan & Lim (2014) documented a close relative, a twin-barred gliding snake (*Chrysopelea pelias*), catching a spotted house gecko (*Gekko monarchus*), but was unable to subdue it. The gecko had clamped its jaws onto the side of the snake's neck and refused to let go, thereby preventing the snake from biting it and moving it to a position in which it can be swallowed. The snake eventually released the gecko (Tan & Lim, 2014).

References:

- 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 and Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- Chan K. W. & V. D'Rozario, 2013. Paradise gliding snake preying on bamboo bat. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 52-58.
- Tan H. H., 2014. Paradise gliding snake carcass at urban Choa Chu Kang. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 229.
- Tan S. K. & K. K. P. Lim, 2014. A twin-barred gliding snake's failed attempt to prey on gecko. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 72.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

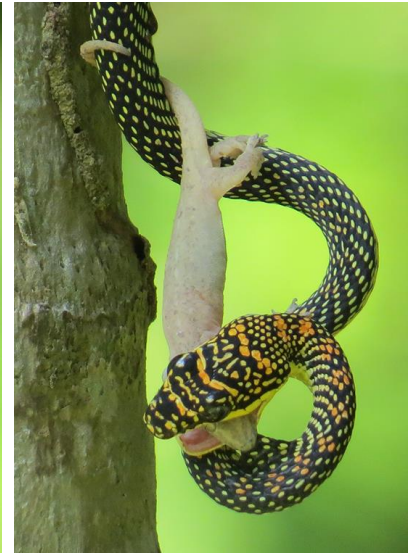


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

Photographs by Morgany d/o Thangavelu