

## Keeled rat snake preying on striped kukri snake

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**Subjects:** Keeled rat snake, *Ptyas carinata* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae);  
Striped kukri snake, *Oligodon octolineatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

**Subjects identified by:** Ong Chew Chuan.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Thomson Nature Park; 6 July 2020; 1735 hrs.

**Habitat:** Secondary forest, among leaf litter about 1 m away from a walking trail.

**Observer:** Ong Chew Chuan.

**Observation:** A rat snake of approximately 1.5 m total length was observed to have swallowed the head and anterior body of a striped kukri snake (Fig. 1). The kukri snake was still moving and its body and tail (approximately 15 cm in length) were coiled firmly around a branch. The rat snake lifted its head, moved around the branch and continued to pull backwards into the shrubs (Fig. 2). The kukri snake gradually lost its grip on the branch, and flailed about as the rat snake moved backwards into the shrubbery (Fig. 3) until the observer lost sight of both snakes.

**Remarks:** Keeled rat snakes are a diurnal species with a described diet of small vertebrates consisting of amphibians and rodents, while striped kukri snakes are nocturnal in habits (Baker & Lim, 2008; Das, 2010). To our knowledge, the featured observation seems to be the first published documentation of ophiophagy in *Ptyas carinata*.



Fig. 1. Keeled rat snake with head raised, in the act of swallowing a striped kukri snake. Photograph by Ong Chew Chuan



Fig. 2. Keeled rat snake in the midst of swallowing a striped kukri snake, whose tail is coiled around a branch.



Fig. 3. Keeled rat snake pulling backwards in attempt to dislodge the striped kukri snake that is anchored to the branch by its tail.

Photographs by Ong Chew Chuan

**References:**

- Baker N & Lim K (2008) *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes.* Draco Publishing & Distribution and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- Das I (2010) *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of Southeast Asia.* New Holland Publishers, London, United Kingdom. 376 pp.