

Predation of brown tree skink by an Oriental whip snake

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Subjects: Oriental whip snake, *Ahaetulla prasina* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae);
Brown tree skink, *Dasia grisea* (Reptilia: Squamata: Scincidae).

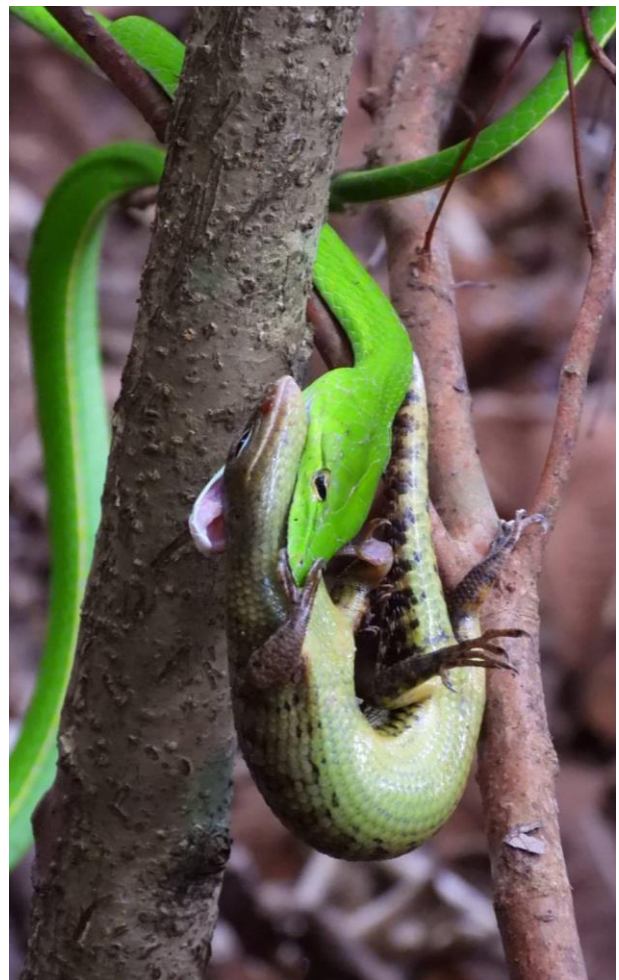
Subjects identified by: Naomi Kim (snake) and Jerome Lee (skink).

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 2 January 2020; 1230 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest edge.

Observer: Naomi Kim.

Observation: An approximately 2 m long whip snake was found with its jaws clamped over the head of a brown tree skink (see accompanying pictures). The snake began to consume the skink after manoeuvring the skink's head in towards its mouth. It took about 30 minutes for the skink to be completely swallowed. A juvenile Equatorial spitting cobra (*Naja sumatrana*) was observed to slither past, but it did not disturb the whip snake ingesting its meal.



Oriental whip snake with its jaws clamped onto the head of a brown tree skink, and manoeuvring it into position for swallowing. Photographs by Naomi Kim

Remarks: The Oriental whip snake is known to feed on lizards (Baker & Lim, 2010) but this may be the first published record of one devouring a brown tree skink. The brown tree skink has been recorded to fall prey to a Kopstein's bronzeback snake (*Dendrelaphis kopsteini*) by Baker (2020). In Singapore, this lizard occurs in various parts of the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves, and adjacent nature parks. This may be the first published record of *Dasia grisea* at Upper Seletar Reservoir Park, but this is not surprising since the species is already known from the adjacent Nee Soon swamp-forest and Springleaf forest (Figueroa et al., 2020).

References:

- Baker N (2020) Predation of brown tree skink by a Kopstein's bronzeback snake. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2020: 13-14.
- Baker N & Lim K (2012) Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes. Updated edition. Draco Publishing & Distribution and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- Figueroa A, Tan C, Tan J & Teo KM (2020) Recent observations of brown and olive tree skinks, with a review of records from Singapore. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2020: 78-82.