

## Biodiversity Record: Haas's bronzeback snake preying on copper checked frog

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**Subjects:** Haas's bronzeback snake, *Dendrelaphis haasi* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae);  
Copper-checked frog, *Chalcorana labialis* (Amphibia: Anura: Ranidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Terence Szeto.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, at the edge of Lower Peirce Reservoir; 18 February 2024; around 1630 hrs.

**Habitat:** Secondary forest. On a tree about 2 m above the ground.

**Observers:** Terence Szeto and others.

**Observation:** A Haas's bronzeback snake of about 90 cm was observed with its head and anterior body suspended in the air from a branch, trying to swallow a copper-checked frog (Fig. 1). It had the frog's head in its throat, and was making slight movements to try to haul the frog into its mouth every few minutes. After 15 minutes of observation where it made little progress, the observers left the scene. They returned about half an hour later to find that the snake had finished its meal. With a large bulge in its midsection, the snake slithered further up the tree.

**Remarks:** This appears to be the first observation in Singapore of *Dendrelaphis haasi* in the act of predation, and the confirmation of *Chalcorana labialis* being consumed as prey by this species. Apparently the diet and reproductive habits of this species were unstudied (Das, 2018; Charlton, 2020).

In Singapore, *Dendrelaphis haasi* has been recorded only from the Central Catchment Nature Reserve and adjacent nature parks. It seems to be rarely encountered and is regarded as 'Critically Endangered' in the country (Figueroa et al., 2023).

### Literature cited:

- Charlton T (2020) A Guide to Snakes of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Natural History Publications (Borneo), Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, viii + 300 pp.
- Das I (2018) A Naturalist's Guide to the Snakes of Southeast Asia. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. John Beaufoy Publishing, England, 176 pp.
- Figueroa A, Low MEY & Lim KKP (2023) Singapore's herpetofauna: updated and annotated checklist, history, conservation, and distribution. Zootaxa, 5287: 1–378.



Fig. 1. Lateral view of the snake's head and anterior body suspended in the air with the head of the frog engulfed in its throat. (Photograph by: Terence Szeto)