

Biodiversity Record: Predation of a Sunda colugo by a reticulated python

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Subjects: Reticulated python, *Malayopython reticulatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Pythonidae); Sunda colugo, *Galeopterus variegatus* (Mammalia: Dermoptera: Cynocephalidae).

Subjects identified by: James Chua and Emmanuel Goh.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Mandai Track 15; 5 November 2025; around 2204 hrs.

Habitat: Mature and disturbed secondary forest.

Observers: Emmanuel Goh, James Chua, Angelina Wan, and Ryan Toh.

Observation: A reticulated python of 1.5–2 m total length was noticed on a tree fork about 4 m above ground at 2100 hrs. When the observers passed by the same tree at 2204 hrs, they found the python wrapped around a large reddish-brown object that was revealed to be an adult sunda colugo. The colugo emitted distress calls as it struggled against the python. During the constriction process, the python was observed pressing the colugo against a fork on the tree trunk (Fig. 1). By 2219 hrs, the colugo was no longer struggling or calling, and was then presumed to have died. At 2246 hrs, the python attempted to swallow the colugo (Fig. 2). Regurgitation occurred 10 minutes later, and the python spent around 5 minutes repositioning the colugo before attempting to swallow it again (Figs. 3 & 4). The prey was fully consumed at 2325 hrs.

Remarks: The reticulated python is a widespread predatory species that occupies both natural and urban habitats in Singapore (Law et al., 2025). It usually hunts warm-blooded animals such as mammals and birds, and kills its prey by constriction (Corlett, 2011). The Sunda colugo, being a mammal, is known to be part of the python's diet. There is at least one record of a colugo being regurgitated by a 1.5 m python in the grounds of the Singapore Zoo (Yeong et al., 2019). As no colugos were observed on the same tree as the featured python at 2100 hrs, it seems highly likely that the featured colugo had unknowingly glided onto the same tree within striking distance of the python. As more effort and balance is required to secure a prey item on a tree compared to the ground, it is also interesting to observe the python apparently leveraging on the tree trunk to kill the colugo.

Literature cited:

- Corlett RT (2011) Vertebrate carnivores and predation in the Oriental (Indomalayan) region. The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, 59(2): 325–360.
- Law IS, Law IT, Shivaram R, Serin S & Sankar A (2025) A Field Guide to the Reptiles & Amphibians of Singapore. John Beaufoy Publishing, Oxford, 180 pp.
- Yeong C, Lee P, Lim J & Quek D (2019) Attempted predation of Sunda colugo by a reticulated python. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2019: 7.



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Fig. 1. The python apparently pressing the colugo against a fork on the tree trunk. (Photograph by: James Chua)

Fig. 2. The python attempting to swallow the colugo. (Photograph by: Ryan Toh)

Fig. 3. The python widening its jaws to accommodate the adult colugo. (Photograph by: James Chua)

Fig. 4. The python halfway through the swallowing process. (Photograph by: James Chua)