

**Short Communication****Feeding behaviour of Tawny Asian Cat Snake *Boiga multomaculata ochracea* (Theobald 1868) from Southeast Bangladesh**Md. Mizanur Rahman* and Sajid Al Rafi¹

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The Tawny Asian Cat Snake (*Boiga multomaculata ochracea*) is a rear-fanged colubrid that inhabits the mixed evergreen forests of northeast and southeast Bangladesh. The feeding behaviour of this opportunistic predator remains poorly understood. This study presents the first documented observation of *B. m. ochracea* preying on the Oriental Garden Lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) in southeastern Bangladesh and highlights the limited research on the species' feeding ecology.

Introduction

The Tawny Asian Cat Snake (*Boiga multomaculata ochracea*) is a rear-fanged, mostly arboreal, crepuscular and nocturnal colubrid snake which is distributed across most of Myanmar (except for the northern portion of the country), north-eastern India (Mizoram), Bangladesh, north of 18° N latitude of Thailand, and northern Laos (Köhler et al., 2023). The species known to prey on lizards, birds and their eggs, and small mammals (Whitaker and Captain, 2004). Its ophiophagous nature, as described by Pradhan (2021), includes the Black-belly Worm-eating Snake (*Trachischium fuscum*) found in its diet list. However, specific details regarding the species' diet remain scarce. Here, we report on the feeding behaviour of *B. m. ochracea* observed while consuming a garden lizard from south-east Bangladesh.

On 27th December 2024, at 1905 h, an adult *B. m. ochracea* was observed preying on an adult male Oriental Garden Lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) in the rural, hilly plains of Fatikchari upazila under Chattogram district of Bangladesh (22.70638,

91.71972, 18 m elevation). The location was near a small village market along Baroiyadhala-Haidchakia Road and adjacent to Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary, the oldest and richest reserved forest of Bangladesh. The *B. m. ochracea* was perched on the stem of a small Charcoal Tree (*Trema orientale*), while the *C. versicolor* rested on a small branch of Golden Dewdrop (*Duranta erecta*). These two plant species were next to each other. The snake approached the lizard slowly before launching a swift attack, biting the lizard on the neck. Initially, the lizard attempted to escape but was soon tightly constricted by the snake, which coiled around it, leaving only the lizard's head and tail exposed (Fig. 1). The snake exerted pressure on the lizard until it succumbed approximately 30 minutes later. Following the lizard's death, the snake attempted to swallow it multiple times, starting at various points including mid-body, neck and hind limbs before finally beginning at the head (Fig. 2). The ingestion process was slow. After swallowing the body and most of the lizard's long tail, the snake rested briefly for 2-3

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minutes (Fig. 3) before consuming the remainder. The entire feeding process lasted for an hour (one and a half hours after grasping). Once the meal was complete, the snake hung momentarily from the

Golden Dewdrop tree of 0.75 m high before falling to the ground. After a while, the snake moved to the nearest scrubland and disappeared into the leaf litter, likely seeking cover.



Fig. 1. The *B. m. ochracea* tightly coiled to kill the prey. Photo- Sajid Al Rafi.



Fig. 2. The *B. m. ochracea* started to engulf the prey from the head. Photo- Sajid Al Rafi.



Fig. 3. The *B. m. ochracea* in brief rest before engulfing the remainder of the tail. Photo- Sajid Al Rafi.

To our knowledge, this is the first documented report of *B. m. ochracea* preying on *C. versicolor*. Although Patra et al. (2021) previously observed the foraging behaviour of *B. m. ochracea* in a similar context, where the snake approached a *C. versicolor*. In that case, the lizard managed to escape by jumping away just as the snake's tongue touched it. We hope this observation will provide insights into the snake's hunting strategies and its role as a predator, feeding ecology, habitat use, as well as conservation and management efforts.

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Authors contribution

Md. Mizanur Rahman: Conceptualization, data collection, writing original draft, editing, and reviewing the manuscript. Sajid Al Rafi: Data collection and resources, review manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. There are no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could be perceived as influencing the research, analysis, authorship, or publication of this article.

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