

SHORT COMMUNICATION

# Attempted predation of *Ptychozoon horsfieldii* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) by *Chrysopelea paradisi* (Serpentes: Colubridae) in Borneo

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**Palavras-chave:** dieta, lagartixa-planadora-de-horsfield, répteis planadores, serpente-planadora-do-paráiso, tentativa de predação.

The Paradise Tree Snake, *Chrysopelea paradisi* (Boie, 1827), is a slender, colorful tree snake, common in the lowland forests (up to 1500 m elevation) of Southeast Asia (including Borneo; Stuebing *et al.* 2014). This diurnal, arboreal species inhabits primary and secondary forests, tree-shaded gardens, and occasionally enters old wooden houses (Stuebing *et al.* 2014). *Chrysopelea paradisi* is able to glide from one tree to the next by flattening its body into a J-shaped posture prior to launching itself into the air (Socha 2006, 2011). It is a well-known predator of lizards, especially geckos, but amphibians and other small vertebrates also are eaten (Malkmus *et al.* 2002, Stuebing *et al.* 2014). Some authors also have documented *C. paradisi* preying on the agamid lizard,

*Bronchocela cristatella* (Lim and Peral 1959) and skinks, including *Lamprolepis smaragdina* (Gaulke 1986) and *Apterygodon vittatum* (Minton and Das 2012). Other authors have also recorded geckos as prey: *Gekko gekko* (Mebert and Durso 2014) and *Gekko monarchus* by the closely related *C. pelias* (Leong and Foo 2009).

Horsfield's Gliding Gecko, *Ptychozoon horsfieldii* (Gray, 1827), is a medium-sized, forest-dwelling gecko that occurs in primary and secondary lowland forests (up to 300 m elevation) of Borneo, Thailand, and the Malay Peninsula (Inger *et al.* 2010). However, records of this species from outside of Borneo have not been verified. It is well adapted for arboreal life, possessing lateral skin fringes, and distally dilated fingers and toes with extensive webbing that facilitates parachuting for short distances (Malkmus *et al.* 2002). There are no reports of arboreal snakes preying on *P. horsfieldii*, but a closely related species, *P. kuhli*, was reported as

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a prey of the arboreal snakes *Dendrelaphis pictus* (McCleary and Ichtiarani 2015) and *D. kopsteini* (Das 1999, 2007).

On 26 January 2015, we observed an adult *Chrysopelea paradisi* (SVL = 90 cm) ingesting a subadult *Ptychozoon horsfieldii* (SVL = 12 cm). The observation took place at 12:15 h under the canopy tower of the Ulu Temburong National Park (Brunei Darussalam; 4.551° N, 115.160° E, WGS84; 212 m a.s.l.) near the Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre. The *C. paradisi* was about 3 m above ground hanging from a small tree and attempting to swallow a gecko. The gecko was bent into a horseshoe shape with its head and tail in the snake's mouth (Figure 1). After about 5 min, the snake opened its jaws and the *P. horsfieldii* promptly escaped to the nearest tall tree. We assume that the gecko escaped because it was grabbed mid body and thus was difficult to swallow.



**Figure 1.** (A) *Chrysopelea paradisi* hanging from a tree during an attempt to swallow *Ptychozoon horsfieldii*. (B) Close-up of *C. paradisi* and *P. horsfieldii*.

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