



Predation on a Nicobar Frog, *Amnirana nicobariensis* (Stoliczka 1879), by a Nicobar Bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis humayuni* (Tiwari and Biswas 1973), from Great Nicobar Island, Republic of India

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The Andaman and Nicobar Islands contribute substantially to the diversity of India's flora and fauna, introducing Indo-Malayan, Indo-Chinese, and Oceanic elements to the biota (Das 1996; Gadgil 1997). Young Czech naturalist-explorer, Ferdinand Stoliczka (1838–1874) made the first systematic herpetological collection from these islands (Das 1999). At about the same time, Blyth (1846) wrote the first account of the vertebrate fauna.

The Nicobar Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis humayuni*) is an uncommon, diurnally active, arboreal snake that is endemic to Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost and the largest of the Nicobars (Vijayakumar and David 2006). Tiwari and Biswas (1973) described the species on the basis of specimens collected by Humayun Abdul Ali (Biswas and Sanyal 1977). Little is known about the natural history of this island endemic. The Nicobar Frog (*Amnirana nicobariensis*) is widely distributed across southeastern Asia (Frost 2018) and has been recorded in northeastern India (Sen 2004; Sarkar and Ray 2006), the Nicobar Islands (Das 1994), Borneo,

Siberut, Sumatra, Java, Bali, Indonesia (Diesmos et al. 2009), and peninsular Thailand through peninsular Malaysia (Taylor 1962; Berry 1975; Frith 1977).

At 1446 h on 17 March 2018, during a visit to the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (7°09'58.8"N, 93°44'57.5"E), we encountered an adult male *Dendrelaphis humayuni* (total length ~900 mm) on the forest floor amidst Bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.) leaf litter (Fig. 1a) in the Campbell Bay National Park (Fig. 2). The snake struck an *Amnirana nicobariensis* on the left flank before slowly moving its grip toward the head (Fig. 1b). Although colubrids usually swallow frogs alive and without constriction (Mori 1994), this frog was dead before the snake began swallowing it. Total time from the initial strike to completion was 15 min.

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Fig. 1. A Nicobar Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis humayuni*) swallowing a Nicobar Frog (*Amnirana nicobariensis*) in the Campbell Bay National Park, Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, Great Nicobar Island, India. Photographs by V. Rangasamy.



Fig. 2. Map showing the study site where a Nicobar Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis humayuni*) swallowed a Nicobar Frog (*Amnirana nicobariensis*) in the Campbell Bay National Park, Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, Great Nicobar Island, India.

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