



Notes on Courtship and Breeding Behavior of the Andaman Day Gecko, *Phelsuma andamanensis* Blyth 1861 (Reptilia: Gekkonidae), in the Andaman Islands

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Photographs by the author.

Day geckos in the genus *Phelsuma* Gray 1825 are represented by 52 species distributed mostly in the Afro-Malagasy region (Uetz et al. 2019). The Andaman Day Gecko (*P. andamanensis* Blyth 1861) is the sole representative from the oriental Andaman Archipelago (Blyth 1861; Das 1999). Ratnam (1992) conducted the only targeted study on *P. andamanensis*, addressing its distribution and behavior in the Andaman Archipelago, including descriptions of breeding behavior that included displays such as “genital nudge” and “hind-leg raising walk” in males and females, respectively. Herein, I report an observation of courtship behavior in *P. andamanensis* on 31 January 2016 on Havelock Island (11.98°N, 92.99°E; elevation 108 m asl) in the Ritchie’s Archipelago of the Andamans.

An adult female Andaman Day Gecko, sex identified on the basis of coloration (uniform green and patternless) and the absence of a hemipenial bulge, was perched on a banana plant (*Musa paradisiaca*) about 1 m above the ground at 1054 h. An adult male, sex identified based on coloration (reddish orange spots and streaks on a bright green dorsum and a bluish-green head and tail) and the presence of an evident hemipenial bulge, was perched slightly below the female on the same plant. The male approached the female slowly from behind and touched her tail before nudging her cloacal region with his snout (Fig. 1). When the female apparently indicated that she was receptive to the male’s approach, he mounted her. Copulation lasted for a few minutes until the female released herself from the male’s grip.

On 26 February 2016, I observed a juvenile *Phelsuma andamanensis* (19 mm SVL, 35 mm total length; Fig. 2) in the Interview Island Wildlife Sanctuary. In March 2016, I found another juvenile that had been captured by a juvenile Andaman Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis andamanensis*) on Long

Island. Das (2002) indicated that *P. andamanensis* breeds throughout the year and Whitaker and Whitaker (1979) suggested that the monsoon (May) could be the main hatching



Fig. 1. Courtship and copulation in Andaman Day Geckos (*Phelsuma andamanensis*) on a banana plant on Havelock Island in the Andaman Archipelago. The male approaches the female, touches her tail (A), nudges her cloacal region (B), and mounts her (C), before the female withdraws (D).



Fig. 2. A juvenile Andaman Day Gecko (*Phelsuma andamanensis*) in the Interview Island Wildlife Sanctuary of the Andaman Archipelago.

season. These observations of what appeared to be recently hatched juveniles prior to the monsoon tentatively support Das's (2002) contention of year-round breeding.

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