



Thanatosis in a Green Forest Lizard, *Calotes calotes* (Linnaeus 1758)

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Thanatosis, also known as death-feigning or a state of tonic immobility, is an anti-predator strategy adopted by diverse prey late in the predation sequence and frequently following physical contact by the predator in order to inhibit further attacks by a predator (Humphreys and Ruxton, 2018). It also can function as an instant response to external stimuli (Muliya et al. 2018). This behavior has been recorded in mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, and arthropods (Vogel and Han-Yuen 2010).

At 2312 h on 8 April 2020, during an ongoing survey of the reptilian fauna at A.V.C. College (Autonomous), Mannampandal (11°06'18.80"N, 79°41'27.15"E; WGS84; elev. 33 m asl), we captured a juvenile Green Forest Lizard (*Calotes calotes*) (SVL 33 mm, tail length 89 mm) that we identified based on a description in Daniel (2002). We measured it and, after 168 sec, released it on the ground. It immediately turned upside down and remained in that position

for 378 sec (Fig. 1) before moving suddenly and climbing a nearby vine.

Animals practicing thanatosis presumably manipulate a predator by sending a false indicator of their death prior to making an escape (Honma et al. 2006). Although thanatosis has been reported for a number of reptilian species (summarized in Patel et al. 2016 and Deshmukh et al. 2020), this behavior is poorly documented in agamid lizards and warrants further study.

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Fig. 1. A juvenile Green Forest Lizard (*Calotes calotes*) engaged in thanatosis behavior (left) and after recovering from its immobile state and escaping (right). Photographs by Debaprasad Sengupta.

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