



Cannibalism in the Kachin Smooth Gecko, *Hemidactylus aquilonius* Zug and McMahan 2007 (Squamata: Gekkonidae), from Assam, India

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Cannibalism is not uncommon and has been reported in organisms ranging from protozoans to mammals (Fox 1975). Polis and Myers (1985) noted that cannibalism in amphibians and reptiles can be ecologically important for many species and can strongly influence competitive interactions and life histories of populations. The frequency of cannibalism in any population is influenced by the age, size, sex, and density of conspecifics, degree of relatedness, and available food (Fox 1975; Polis 1981). Polis and Myers (1985) and Mitchell (1986) compiled records of cannibalism in 49 and 191 species of reptiles, respectively (note that the former also included records of conspecific oophagy). However, relatively few species in either account were geckos. More recent accounts of cannibalism by geckos include the Common Leopard Gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*) (Bonke et al. 2011), Northern House Gecko (*Hemidactylus flaviviridis*) (Polis and Myers 1985), Tropical House Gecko (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) (Lyakurwa 2017), and Spotted House Gecko (*Hemidactylus parvimaclatus*) (Dissanayake 2017). Herein, we report cannibalism in the Kachin Smooth Gecko (*Hemidactylus aquilonius*) from Rani, Assam, India.

At 1642 h on 12 August 2020, we heard a faint “chirrup” at the Vulture Conservation Breeding Center, Rani, Assam, India (26.0003 N, 91.5483 E) and subsequently saw an adult *H. aquilonius* with a conspecific juvenile in its grasp (Fig. 1). When the adult adjusted its grip, the juvenile bit its lower jaw, but to no avail. The larger gecko carried its prey to a nearby shutter and swallowed it headfirst. Ingestion was completed at 1649 h.

Literature Cited

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Fig. 1. Cannibalism in Kachin Smooth Geckos (*Hemidactylus aquilonius*) in Rani, Assam, India. Photograph by Sachin Ranade.

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