



# Predation by an Ornate Flying Snake, *Chrysopelea ornata* (Colubridae), on an Indian Bark Gecko, *Hemidactylus leschenaultii* (Gekkonidae), in the Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India

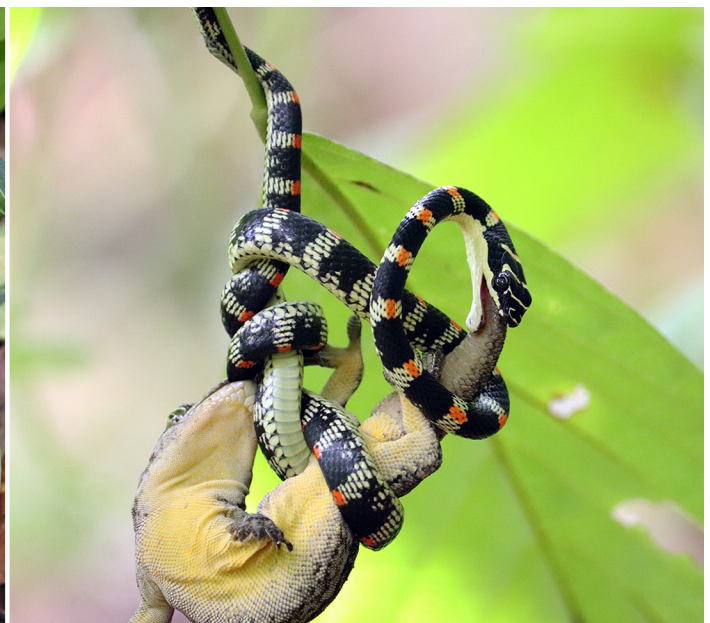
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The Ornate Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*), which glides from higher to lower levels in the forest canopy (Socha 2011), feeds on fish, frogs, geckos and other small lizards, small snakes, and small birds, bats, and rodents (Grossmann 1999; Das 2010; Hasan et al. 2014; Dutta 2015; Melvinselvan and Nibedita 2016; Babu et al. 2018; Ahmed et al. 2020). The Indian Bark Gecko (*Hemidactylus leschenaultii*) exploits a wide variety of habitats, including trees, caves, rock clefts, and houses, frequently basking during the day (Dutta et al. 2009).

During an inventory of biodiversity in the Bonai Forest Division in Sundargarh District of Odisha in eastern India (21.5055°N, 85.0852°E; elev. 903 m asl), we observed predation of an Indian Bark Gecko by an Ornate Flying Snake. At 1259 h on 7 August 2021, we saw a subadult *C. ornata* falling from about 11 m high in a Sal Tree (*Shorea robusta*) and landing with its tail coiled around a branch of a Crocodile Bark Tree (*Terminalia elliptica*) about 0.3 m above the ground. A closer examination revealed that it was holding an Indian Bark Gecko by the tail and had immobilized it with several



**Fig. 1.** An Ornate Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*) preying on an Indian Bark Gecko (*Hemidactylus leschenaultii*) in the Bonai Forest Division, Sundargarh District, Odisha, India. Photographs by Anil Kumar Jena.

loops of its body. The snake started swallowing the gecko tail-first and complete ingestion took 40 min. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first record of an Ornate Flying Snake preying on an Indian Bark Gecko.

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