



Cannibalism in the Common Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) and the Indian Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*)

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Cannibalism is a widespread behavioral trait among many animal species in nature, including snakes (Jofré and Reading 2020). Whereas consumption of conspecific individuals has been observed in snakes, researchers believe it is not intentional. The impact of cannibalism on natural popu-

lation dynamics has been largely overlooked (Fox 1975; Polis 1981; Yadav and Shinde 2021).

Cannibalism has frequently been observed in captive snakes but rarely in nature (Coelho-Lima et al. 2021). In India, snake cannibalism has been reported in the King Cobra



Fig. 1. Cannibalism by a Common Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*). Photographs by Jigar Solanki.



Fig. 2. Pile of tiles where an Indian Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) was envenomated by another cobra. Photographs by Jigar Solanki.

(*Ophiophagus hannah*) (Maritz et al. 2019), less frequently in the Common Catsnake (*Boiga trigonata*) (Trivedi and Thakur 2018), and recently in the Common Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) (Yadav and Shinde 2021). However, photographic evidence of krait cannibalism in the wild is rare. Herein we present the first photographic evidence of cannibalism in the Common Krait, and record the first documented case of cannibalism in the Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*).

At about 1930 h on 16 November 2021, Jigar Solanki received a call to rescue a snake from Talegaon Dabhade, Pune District, India (18.735019°N, 73.662561°E; 577 m asl). The location is near a garden in a residential area. We observed an adult krait feeding on a conspecific subadult. The adult fully ingested the smaller individual in 10 minutes, after which the adult was rescued and released into the wild after half an hour to avoid regurgitation (Fig. 1).

At about 1700 h on 12 July 2021, Jigar Solanki received a call to rescue a cobra located at Vadgaon Maval, Pune District, India (18.740820°N, 73.640424°E; 631 m asl). The subadult cobra was hiding in a pile of tiles (Fig. 2) and was in defensive position. After slowly removing the tiles, we found that the cobra had been caught by an adult conspecific. The adult had envenomated the smaller snake and might have been trying to feed on it. While attempting to remove the snakes, the adult managed to escape; the subadult was captured but died after an hour.

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