



Notes on Clutch Size, Incubation Period, and Hatchling Size of the Ornate Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*)

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The Ornate Flying Snake, *Chrysopelea ornata* (Shaw 1802), is a widely distributed colubrid found across most of southern and southeastern Asia (IUCN Bangladesh 2015). It is an arboreal species that is active by day and feeds on lizards, small mammals, snakes, and insects (Smith 1943; Dutta 2015). The species is able to glide from higher to lower levels within the forest canopy (Socha 2011). This makes *C. ornata* a versatile hunter but harder to study. Therefore, very little is known about the breeding biology of this species. Smith (1943) reported observations of mating in *C. ornata* occurring in June in Bangkok, Thailand, with clutch sizes ranging between 6–12 eggs.

At about 1200 h on 30 April 2022, a gravid female *C. ornata* was rescued from the Azara area of Guwahati City, Assam, India (26.1212 N, 91.6161 E). The rescued individual was quarantined in the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden. On 4 May 2022, it laid 10 eggs measuring 28–30 mm in length and 15–17 mm in diameter (Fig 1A). The eggs were elongated and oval in shape, and were bright white when laid, but later became dirty off-white. The eggs were incubated in a plastic box at ambient temperatures using vermiculite as a substrate, with two holes on the two sides of the box for cross-ventilation. The eggs were kept in the dark and humidity was maintained by periodic sprinkling of water.

Of the 10 eggs, five were discarded within 13 days because they appeared to have decayed. After an incubation period of 71 days, the remaining eggs began hatching at about 1840 h on 14 July 2022 (Fig. 1B), and within 12 hours all had hatched. Hatchlings, which were 270–290 mm in total length (Fig. 1C), were released into the Hangerabari Reserve Forest on 16 July 2022.

Acknowledgements

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Figure 1. A clutch of eggs of the Ornate Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*) (A); a hatchling *C. ornata* emerging from an egg (B); and five hatchlings of *C. ornata* (C). Photographs by Rupankar Bhattacharjee.