



Unusual Mating Behavior of *Dendrelaphis tristis* (Daudin 1803)

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The widely distributed Asian genus *Dendrelaphis* comprises more than forty largely arboreal species often referred to as “treesnakes”. *Dendrelaphis tristis* is a diurnally active species (Harrington et al. 2018), known to occur in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Nepal (Aengals et al. 2022; Bhattarai et al. 2017). Gravid females have been detected throughout the year, and egg-laying sites include tree holes, rotten vegetation in hollow trees, deserted bird nests, and holes in the walls of buildings (Parmar 2020). However, little is known about mating behavior in this species.

At 2130 h on 12 April 2022, on a normal track at Palande, Dapoli, Maharashtra, India (17.798278 N, 73.106306 E), RT encountered a pair of *D. tristis* curled around each other in a Banyan tree hole 2 m above the ground (Fig. 1). Without disturbing the copulating pair, we observed it for six days, detecting the snakes each night between 2100 h and 2330 h in the same hole, but we were unable to find them there during the day (1000–1900 h).

To the best of our knowledge, no available information addresses mating behavior or copulation. Although *Dendrelaphis tristis* is considered to be diurnally active, we documented copulation at night, which would appear to be unusual behavior for a diurnal species. Gestation generally takes 28–45 days (Sayyed 2008; Whitaker and Captain 2004), thus this female presumably would lay eggs in May or June and they would hatch in July or August.

Literature cited

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Fig. 1. A pair of *Dendrelaphis tristis* in copula in a Banyan tree hole in Maharashtra, India. Photograph by Roma Tripathi.

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