



A Case of Batrachophagy by a King Cobra, *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor 1836) (Reptilia: Elapidae), in the Andaman Islands, India

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Snakes are known to consume a vast variety of prey ranging from insects to large mammals (e.g., Brazaitis and Watanabe 1992; Marais 1997; O’Shea 2005; Bhaisare et al. 2010; Baral and Koirala 2020). The largest venomous snake, the King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) feeds primarily on snakes, although it has more rarely been observed consuming other reptiles such as monitor lizards (Whitaker and Captain 2008; Jones et al. 2020; Kurmiawan et al. 2018). Herein, we provide a novel observation of *O. hannah* feeding on a non-native anuran species, the Indian Bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*) in the Andaman Islands of India.

On 4 Oct 2022, we encountered an unsexed adult *O. hannah* (total length ~2.75 m) in Kadamtala (12.3411 N, 92.7758 E; elev. 42 m asl) feeding on an adult *H. tigerinus* in a home garden (Fig. 1). The snake caught the bullfrog by its head; complete ingestion took about 13 min. *Ophiophagus hannah* normally feed on snakes, and instances of ophiophagy have been documented in the Andaman Islands (Vazifdar and Khalid 2021; Fig. 2). These snakes also are known to accept skinned rodents as prey in captive conditions (pers. obs.) but instances of *O. hannah* feeding on frogs have not been previously documented, making the present observation a noteworthy addition to the ecology of this species.



Figure 2. A King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) feeding on an Andaman Keelback (*Fowlea tyleri*) in the Andaman Islands. Photograph by S.R. Chandramouli.

Literature Cited

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Figure 1. A King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) feeding on an Indian Bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*) in Kadamtala, Middle Andaman Island. Photograph by Subratha Basu.

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