



Predation by a Painted Bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis pictus* (Gmelin 1789), on a Crab in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest, Assam, India

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The Painted Bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis pictus* (Gmelin 1789), is a southeast Asian endemic that ranges from the Himalayan foothill regions of India eastward into Indonesia (Hoang et al. 2021; Vogel et al. 2021). Although rarely found in dense forests, *D. pictus* occurs in a variety of habitats including those altered by human activities (Vogel and van Rooijen 2008; Ahmed et al. 2009).

Painted Bronzebacks are diurnally active foragers with a diet consisting mainly of geckos and other lizards, frogs, small birds (including eggs and chicks), rodents, and small snakes (Ahmed et al. 2009; Hasan et al. 2014; Priambodo et al. 2021). Herein we report a field observation of predation on a freshwater crab.

At 1317 h on 17 May 2023, during an ongoing survey of avian diversity at Garbhanga Reserve Forest, Guwahati, Assam, India (26.10944, 92.00805), we encountered a *D. pictus* feeding on a crab near a small stream (Fig. 1). The snake took 5–7 minutes from initial capture to complete ingestion. We later observed the same snake basking close to the site of encounter after finishing its meal.

To confirm the identity of the crab, we searched the stream and found a crab of the same species hiding in the mud. Using photographs (Fig. 2) and Chetia et al. (2022), we identified it as *Maydelliathelphusa lugubris*. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first record of *D. pictus* consuming *M. lugubris*.

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Figure 1. A Painted Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis pictus*) ingesting a freshwater crab (*Maydelliathelphusa lugubris*) in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest, Assam, India. Photograph by Anurudha Chakraborty.



Figure 2. A freshwater crab (*Maydelliathelphusa lugubris*) in natural habitat in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest, Assam, India. Photograph by Dr. Parimal Chandra Ray.

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