



Predation of a Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa latipes* (Drury 1773), by a Peninsular Rock Agama, *Psammophilus blanfordanus* (Stoliczka 1871), from Odisha, India

Subhrakanta Jena^{1,2}, Rakesh Kumar Mohalik¹, Pratyush P. Mohapatra³, and Hemanta Kumar Sahu¹

¹Department of Zoology, MSCB University, Takatpur, Baripada-757003, India

²Department of Applied Microbiology, F.M. University, Nuapadhi, Balasore-756089, India (jena.subhrakanta@gmail.com)

³Reptilia Section, Zoological Survey of India, F.P.S. Building, Kolkata-700016, West Bengal, India (pratyush.m@zsi.gov.in)

In the intricate web of ecological relationships, predator-prey interactions play a vital role in shaping the dynamics of various ecosystems (Schmitz 2017). Within the rich biodiversity of India, the Peninsular Rock Agama (*Psammophilus blanfordanus*) has been identified as an integral member of the local fauna, thriving in the diverse habitats across the region (Corlett 2011). Carpenter Bees (*Xylocopa latipes*), most widely recognized for their damaging wood-boring activities, play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of local ecosystems through their role as pollinators (Morato and Martins 2006).

The typical diet of the Peninsular Rock Agama (*Psammophilus blanfordanus*), a common, social, diurnal, rock-dwelling (rupicolous) agamid, consists mainly of insects, such as ants and termites along with other small arthropods (Aruna et al. 1993; Daniel 2002; Radder et al. 2005), but

these lizards are known to feed occasionally on other lizards (Aruna et al. 1993; Dutta et al. 2009; Sreekar et al. 2010).

We herein present the first photographic record of a female *P. blandfordanus* preying on a Carpenter Bee (Fig. 1). The event, which was already in progress when first observed, occurred on the cement slab of a narrow drain at 1119 h on 9 May 2022 at Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Odisha, India (21.9299, 86.7657; elev. 91 m asl). The unexpected inclusion of a Carpenter Bee in the diet of a Peninsular Rock Agama is surprising because Carpenter Bees are large, robust insects, and the diet of these lizards usually reflects a preference for smaller, more easily captured prey.

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Figure 1. A female Peninsular Rock Agama (*Psammophilus blanfordanus*) preying on a Carpenter Bee (*Xylocopa latipes*). Photographs by Subhrakanta Jena.

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