



A Rice Paddy Snake (*Hypsiscopus plumbea*) Scavenging a Roadkilled Anuran

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Scavenging behavior in snakes appears to be common but is somewhat understudied (DeVault and Krochmal 2002). In their literature review, DeVault and Krochmal (2002) recorded 50 (43 in the field) observations of scavenging by 35 species of snakes, with pitvipers and piscivorous species most frequently represented. Scavenged material included all vertebrate classes, olfaction appeared to be the modality used for carrion detection, and some species might be using scavenging as a deliberate strategy to supplement regular modes of prey acquisition.

Rice Paddy Snakes (*Hypsiscopus plumbea*), common freshwater snakes found in agricultural areas in Southeast Asia, are known to prey on crustaceans, fish, and larval and adult anurans (Voris and Karns 1996; Voris and Murphy 2002; Murphy 2007; Fabre et al. 2016).

At 2044 h on 11 July 2024, two hours after a light rain, we observed a juvenile *H. plumbea* (total length < 100 mm) attempting to ingest a considerably damaged, unidentified, roadkilled anuran (possibly *Fejervarya* sp.) (Fig. 1) in the middle of a two-lane paved road adjacent to an agricultural area

(oil-palm, rice, and fallow field) and < 20 m from a house in Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand (8.6165240, 99.8864645). At 2045 h, a 125-cc motorcycle passed < 5 m from the snake, which continued its attempt to ingest its prey after pausing for a few seconds. However, presumably frightened by the motorcycle, it dragged its meal to the side of the road, where it remained for about 10 minutes before leaving the road altogether with its prey still in its mouth. At 2055 h, we concluded the observation without further disturbing the snake. This is the first record of *H. plumbea* scavenging a roadkill. A short summary of this observation in the Thai language and a short video are available at https://osf.io/k29g6/?view_only=4a39cce8ef6d4f4b96d815305d425cd8.

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Figure 1. A Rice Paddy Snake (*Hypsiscopus plumbea*) attempting to ingest a roadkilled anuran (possibly *Fejervarya* sp.) in an agricultural area in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Photograph by U. Zafirah.