



Predation by a Dussumier's Litter Skink, *Sphenomorphus dussumieri* (Duméril and Bibron 1839), on a Coastal Day Gecko, *Cnemaspis littoralis* (Jerdon 1853), in Keralam, India

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At about 1110 h on 6 April 2018 in Kottayam, Keralam, India (9.59766, 76.51119; elev. 28 m asl), I observed a Coastal Day Gecko (*Cnemaspis littoralis*) sitting low on the bark of a banana plant (*Musa* sp.) being attacked and caught by a Dussumier's Litter Skink (*Sphenomorphus dussumieri*) that had been perching nearby on an arrangement of boulders

and bricks (Fig. 1). The skink caught the gecko by its neck and brought it back to its perch, where the gecko struggled for about a minute, after which it stopped moving. After about 6 min, the skink, which likely was disturbed by my presence, retreated into a gap between some bricks while carrying the clearly dead gecko in its mouth.



Figure 1. A Dussumier's Litter Skink (*Sphenomorphus dussumieri*) preying on a Coastal Day Gecko (*Cnemaspis littoralis*) in Keralam, India. Photograph by Christopher John Issac.

Both predator and prey species are endemic to the Western Ghats (Srinivasulu et al. 2014). The ground-dwelling skink occurs in gardens, plantations, and forests close to human habitation in the southern Western Ghats, where it occupies the litter and feeds on invertebrates such as insects and worms (Das and Das 2017; Jauyakumar and Nameer 2018). The arboreal Coastal Day Gecko occurs in acacia, coconut, rubber, and teak plantations near human habitation, where they function as human commensals and feed on mites and small insects such as ants (Cyriac and Umesh 2013; M U and Jose 2022). Although the two species share habitats in the Western Ghats, their distinct niches suggest that they would rarely encounter each other in nature. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first recorded instance of a Dussumier's Litter Skink preying on a vertebrate.

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