



Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) predation on a Common Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) in New South Wales, Australia

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Australia is home to approximately 10% of the world's reptilian species (1,145 species as of 26 December 2023), the largest number of any country in the world (Tingley et al. 2019; Geyle et al. 2020; Butler 2023; Scott et al. 2024). The Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) (Varanidae), an Australian endemic, is distributed across coastal areas, mountain ranges, and adjoining plains of eastern and southeastern Australia (Smitsen et al. 2013; Venz et al. 2018). *Varanus varius*, a large carnivorous predator, feeds on insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals (Weavers 1989, 1993; Guarino 2001, 2002; Jolly et al. 2016; Pascoe et al. 2019).

The Common Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), a marsupial native to Australia, has a broad distribution

from Cape York southward through eastern and southeastern Australia, reaching as far west as South Australia, and also occurs on Tasmania and many offshore islands (Lindenmayer et al. 2008; Winter et al. 2016). These marsupials inhabit a wide range of habitats, including tropical moist forests, temperate forests, and coastal scrublands, as well as rural gardens and urban areas (McKay and Ong 2008; Winter et al. 2016).

At 1515 h on 19 April 2025, during a herpetofaunal survey in Lane Cove National Park, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia (-33.778787, 151.135153), we observed an adult *V. varius* feeding on a recently killed *P. peregrinus* (Fig. 1). The monitor had already consumed more than half of its prey, with only portions of the hindlimbs and tail remain-



Figure 1. A Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) eating a Common Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) in Lane Cove National Park, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Photographs by Michael Crawford.

ing. Previous studies (Krefft 1866; McCoy 1880; Hill 1916; Waite 1929) have reported the presence of possum body parts among the stomach contents of Lace Monitors, but prey species were not specified. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first documented instance of *V. varius* preying on *P. peregrinus*.

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