

Natural History Notes

LAMPROPHOLIS DELICATA (Common Garden Skink): **COPROPHAGY.** *Lampropholis delicata* is a small terrestrial lizard, common and widespread on the coast and mountain ranges of southeastern Australia (Cogger, 2000). It is common in anthropogenic urban habitats, and with well-developed arboreal capabilities is sometimes observed on vertical surfaces such as brick and concrete block walls, wooden fences, the lower trunks of rough barked trees, and shade cloth netting (pers. obs.). Its reported diet comprises terrestrial, arboreal and flying arthropods (e.g. Crome, 1981). This note reports an instance of coprophagy by *L. delicata*, hitherto unreported, in an anthropogenic urban habitat.

On 6 January 2013, 15:36 h (Australian Eastern Standard Time), in Werrington (a western suburb of metropolitan Sydney), New South Wales, Australia, at 33°45'35.0"S, 150°45'25.5"E (WGS84 grid), 28 m elevation, ambient temperature 33.1°C, 0/8 cloud cover, medium gusts of easterly breeze, the author observed an adult (total length ~80 mm) *L. delicata* with a complete original tail resting in the shade on the base of an old lamp in the covered area next to the author's dwelling. The lizard held a dried scat (length ~11 mm, maximum diameter ~2.5 mm) of a subadult treefrog *Litoria dentata* transversely in its jaws; the scat was comprised of compacted arthropod exoskeletal elements and recognisable from its characteristic shape and size. *L. dentata* is also common on the property. Approached closer, the lizard leapt off the lamp base on to

the concrete, and moved briskly away from the observer until lost from view; hence ingestion of the scat was not observed. Neither the *L. delicata* nor the scat were collected or photographed. It is likely that the lizard discovered the scat whilst foraging on old furniture and other objects, and subsequently descended to where it was encountered by the author. Motion is the primary cue eliciting predatory feeding responses in most lizard species including *L. delicata* (pers. obs.), although in the above case olfaction was presumably involved, perhaps aided by visual recognition of the item as potential food which would imply memory based on local experience. Notable was the retention of the scat by the lizard despite pursuit by the observer. In observations of large numbers of active *L. delicata* at many localities over an extensive period, this is the only case of coprophagy noted by the author.

REFERENCES

- Cogger, H. G. (2000). *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia* (6th ed.). Reed New Holland, Frenchs Forest, N.S.W., Australia. 808 pp.
- Crome, B. 1981. The diet of some ground-layer lizards in three woodlands of the New England Tableland of Australia. *Herpetofauna* 13 (1): 4-11.

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