

## *Hemidactylus flaviviridis* (Reptilia: Gekkonidae): Predation on Congeneric *Hemidactylus frenatus* in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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Nine species of the family Gekkonidae have been reported from Bangladesh, including 6 species of the genus *Hemidactylus* (Chakma, 2009). These geckos are usually arboreal, ground and rock dwellers while some show commensalism, living in close association with humans. Geckos are mainly insectivores with exception of a few herbivores and carnivores while they are preyed upon by a variety of animals (Daniel, 2002). House geckos resemble each other very closely in habits. Among these *H. flaviviridis* is the largest having a total length of about 180 mm, typically living in close association with the human and human-made structures both in urban and rural areas (Chakma, 2009). The main food of *H. flaviviridis* is insects including caterpillars, but sometimes they eat any animal they can overcome, including other geckos and smaller snakes (Bauer 1990). Smaller insects are swallowed whole while larger prey are battered to death, to a manageable softness and eaten; they generally avoid dangerous insects and occasionally show cannibalism (Sahi, 1916; Polis & Myers, 1985). With a total length of 125 mm *H. frenatus* occupies a variety of habitats including trees, stones and human habitations (Chakma, 2009). This species is exclusively nocturnal (Chakma, 2009; Daniel, 2002). Here we report an instance of *H. flaviviridis* preying upon the congeneric *H. frenatus*.

On the 1st September 2014 at 20:35 hrs we observed *H. flaviviridis* attack a *H. frenatus* on a wall at about 9.144 m above the ground at Chunkutia (23.6973873° N, 90.3887799° E) in Keraniganj district, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Both species were identified using the identification key provided by Mahony (2011). The *H. flaviviridis* seized *H. frenatus* at the neck and hit it against the wall three times then remained motionless for about 20 seconds. It gradually moved its jaws around the neck towards the head always maintaining a secure grip on the prey then began to swallow it head first (Fig. 1). At that time the first author took a photograph using flash, which frightened the *H. flaviviridis* causing it to abandon the *H. frenatus* and take refuge in the darkness behind a table. This also frightened the half dead *H. frenatus*, which also ran for shelter behind the table but seized again by the *H. flaviviridis*. The *H. frenatus* attempted to escape by kicking on the predator's head with its hind limb but the *H. flaviviridis* firmed its bite and again remain motionless for about 1 minute and 25s until the *H. frenatus* became weak. The *H. flaviviridis* began to swallow the unfortunate *H. frenatus* head first which took 2 m 53s to consume. After feeding, *H. flaviviridis* moved towards the darker side of wall behind the table.

There are very few records of *H. flaviviridis* feeding on vertebrates and this is the first record of a *H. flaviviridis* feeding on another gecko in Bangladesh. However, several



Figure 1. *H. flaviviridis* preying on *H. frenatus*

authors, for example Sumithran (1982), Dattarti (1984), Kannan & Krishnaraj (1988) and Somaweera (2005) reported *H. leschenaultii* preying on a rat, gecko, skink and a colubrid snake whilst Karunarathna & Amarasinge (2011) recorded *H. hunae* preying upon *Bandicoota bengalensis* (Mammalia: Rodentia).

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