

# Probably first reported case from Indonesia of a lizard (Scincidae: *Lipinia* sp.) being preyed upon by a spider (Sparassidae: *Pandercetes* sp.)

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Arthropods such as spiders have occasionally been documented as predators of lizards. The majority of observations have been made in Europe, only very few reports exist from Asia (e.g. Priyadarshana & Wijewardana, 2016). We here report on the first documented case of predation by an arachnid on a lizard in Indonesia. This occurred on Batudaka Island (0°24'43"S, 121°51'54"E), Togian Islands, in Central Sulawesi Province. During field work on 9 July 2006 around 17.00h, we observed a palm-sized spider (Sparassidae: *Pandercetes* sp.) at about eye-level on a lichen-covered trunk in a rather wild cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) plantation. It had caught a small skink (Scincidae: *Lipinia* sp.) whose head was held in the spider's chelicerae with the rest of the body hanging motionless down the trunk (Fig. 1). The hairy and whitish spider was well-camouflaged on the bright lichens that covered large areas of the tree bark.

After taking some photographs of both specimens *in-situ*, capture was attempted but the spider escaped and the presumed dead or numb lizard fell to the ground. Despite thorough attempts to trace the skink it could not be found. From the photographs taken, however, the specimen can at least be assigned to genus level. The colour pattern consisting of a prominent golden-yellow longitudinal stripe along the back is typical for most members of *Lipinia* skinks (Greer, 1974). The second half of the tail is orange. On Sulawesi, only two species of this Asian lizard genus are known with certainty (Koch, 2012), viz. *L. subvittata* and *L. infralineolata*. A third species, *L. quadrivittata*, has been listed for that island (Iskandar & Tjan, 1996) but is probably restricted to the Philippines (Brown & Alcala, 1980; Das & Austin, 2007).

This observation adds to our knowledge of the predatory interactions between spiders and vertebrates. The fact that this report is probably the first documented predation of a lizard by a spider in Indonesia highlights the need for increased efforts to study in greater depths the ecological relationships of the diverse herpetofauna of this tropical island nation.

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**Figure 1.** A sparassid spider (*Pandercetes* sp.) on the lichen-covered trunk of a cacao tree with its reptilian prey, a *Lipinia* skink, on Batudaka Island, Togian Islands, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

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