

Predation on the common house gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus* by an Asian hermit spider *Nephilengys malabarensis* in Sri Lanka

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The common house gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus* is a relatively small (SVL 51 mm) arboreal lizard. It is native to south-east Asia with a widespread distribution in the Pacific islands; it has also been introduced widely elsewhere by anthropogenic means (Rodda, 2020). There are numerous records of various species of spider predating lizards (Bauer, 1990; Koch & Arida, 2017; van Blerk et al., 2020; Tripathy & Priyadarshini, 2022), including *Hemidactylus* sp. (Purkayastha & Sourav, 2011; Lanschi & Ferreira, 2012; Turner, 2018). However, these have not included the Asian hermit spider *Nephilengys malabarensis* (Araneae: Nephilidae).

We report the first observation of *H. frenatus* predation by *N. malabarensis* (Fig. 1A). The observation was made in a house at Peradeniya (Kandy District), Sri Lanka (7.26704° N, 80.58407° E). There was no vegetation close to the web of the spider which was built around 60 cm from the floor on a staircase open to the natural surrounding. At 10:34 h on 26 July 2018, we observed an adult female *N. malabarensis* feeding on a dead *H. frenatus*, without its tail, that was entangled in her web (Fig. 1B).

Diniz (2011) has already reported nephilid spiders as predators of *Hemidactylus* sp. in Brazil. The frequency of this in Sri Lanka remains unrecorded.

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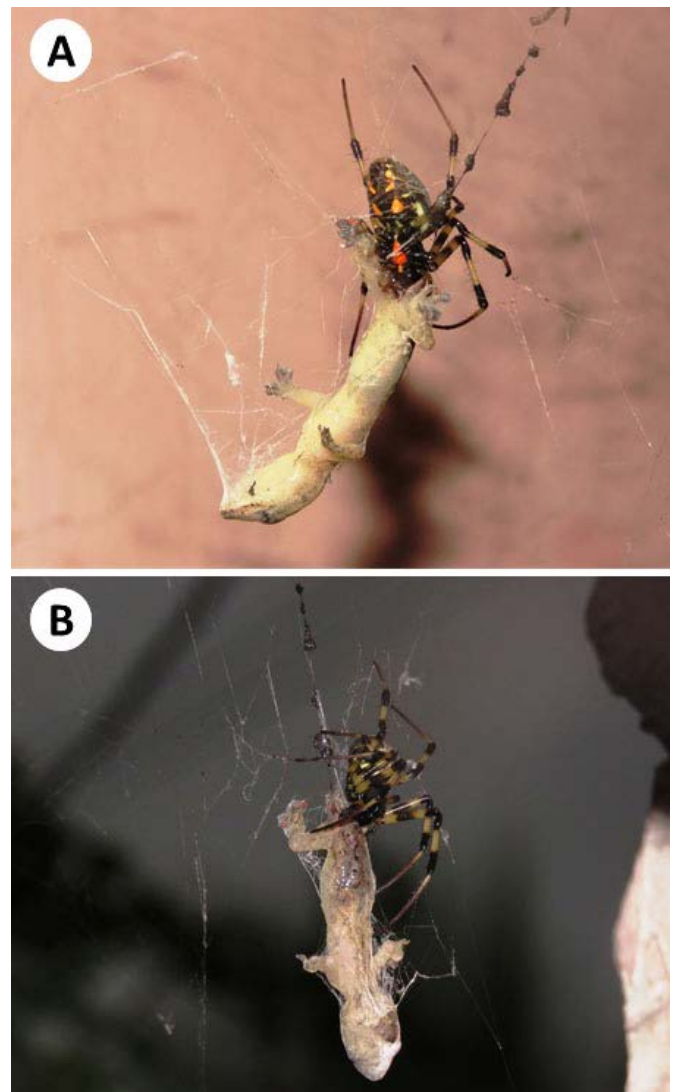


Figure 1. A female Asian hermit spider *Nephilengys malabarensis* feeding on a common house gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*, at Peradeniya, Kandy District, Sri Lanka

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