

Predation by Philippine Vine Snake *Ahaetulla prasina preocularis* on Philippine forest skink *Pinoyscincus* sp. on Luzon Island, Philippines

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Observer: Manny Sevilla.

Photograph by: Manny Sevilla.

Subject identified by: Cyrus Job P. Dela Cruz; Emerson Y. Sy.

Location: Luzon Island, Barangay San Jose, Municipality of San Vicente, Camarines Norte Province, Philippines.

Elevation: 463 metres ASL.

Habitat: Secondary growth forest.

Date and time: 29 September 2022, 08: 00 hrs.

Identity of subjects:

- (i) Philippine Vine Snake, *Ahaetulla prasina preocularis* (Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Colubridae).
- (ii) Philippine forest skink, *Pinoyscincus* sp. (Reptilia: Squamata: Sauria: Scincidae).

Description of record:

A slender green snake approximately 110 cm in total length was observed biting a skink on the back just behind the anterior limbs (Fig. 1).

The skink struggled for a couple of minutes, but eventually was immobilized. The snake proceeded to swallow its prey head first, but the actual consumption was not observed.

Remarks:

Ahaetulla prasina is an arboreal and diurnal snake that can be identified by its long and slender body, head is elongated and distinct from neck, pupils are horizontal, and lack of markings on dorsum (Sy, in press).

Members of the genus *Ahaetulla* are known to feed on small lizards, birds, frogs, mammals, and occasionally on fishes and snakes (Dunbar and Dunbar, 2015; Lalbiakzuala et al., 2019; Mohalik and Kar, 2019).

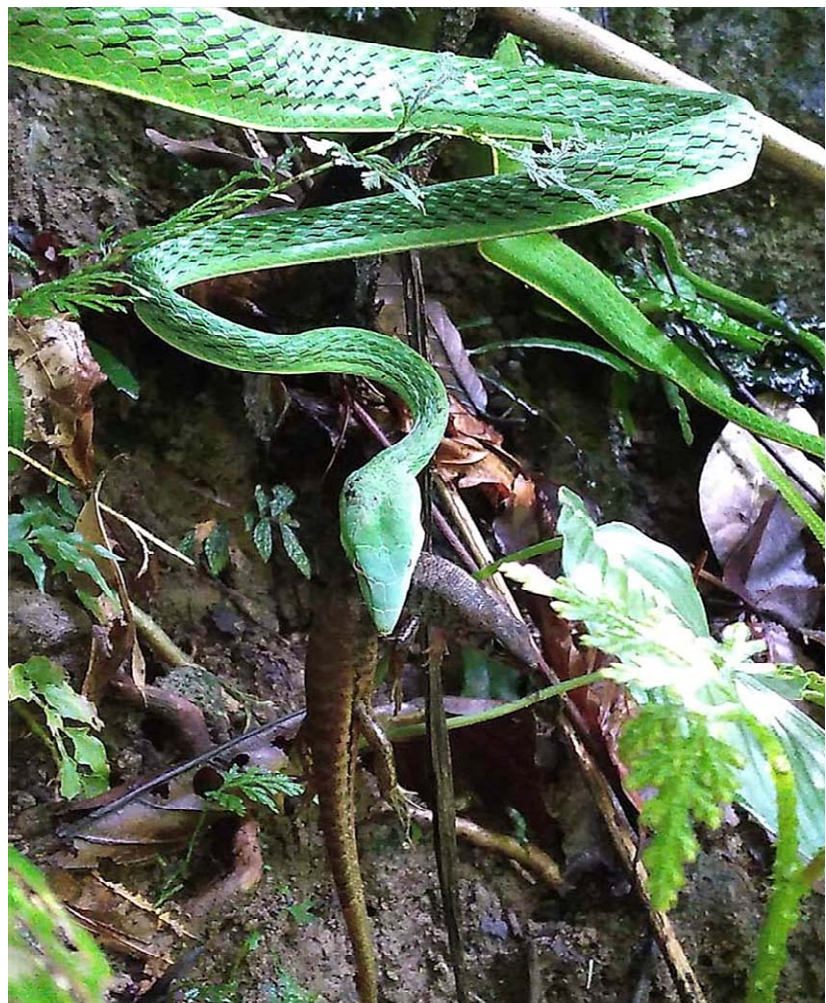


Fig. 1.

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The subspecies *A. p. preocularis* is endemic to the Philippines and is known to occur on the islands of Basilan, Batan, Bohol, Camiguin Norte, Camiguin Sur, Cebu, Dinagat, Jolo, Leyte, Luzon, Marinduque, Masbate, Mindanao, Mindoro, Negros, Panay, Polillo, Sabtang, Samar, Sibutu, Sibuyan, and Tablas (Leviton et al., 2018). It has been reported to feed on geckos and skinks (including genus *Mabuya* = *Eutropis*) (Leviton, 1968) and unidentified frogs (Gaulke, 2011). The skink was identified as *Pinoyscincus* sp. based on its short and tapering snout, moderate size, and black dorsolateral stripe (Brown & Alcala, 1980; Linkem et al., 2011). Although the Philippine Vine Snake is arboreal in nature, it may also descend to the forest floor while looking for prey (Leviton, 1968). This note adds *Pinoyscincus* sp. to the list of known prey items.

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