

Checked keelback water snake *Xenochropis piscator* (Schneider, 1799) in the diet of Garden Calotes *Calotes versicolor* (Daudin, 1802)

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Calotes versicolor (Daudin, 1802) is the most common and widely distributed agamid lizard in India (Daniel, 2002). The distribution of this lizard ranges from the whole Indian Sub-continent to most of Southeast Asia and it is described as an arboreal, diurnal lizard that prefers to inhabit gardens, hedges, scrublands, thick forests as well as dry desert biotope (Daniel, 2002). Information about the diet and feeding behavior of Indian lizards is fragmentary (Pal et al., 2007). The diet of *Calotes versicolor* is known to consist mostly of insects, millipedes, centipedes, earthworms, plant matter, bird eggs, as well as a variety of vertebrates including small birds, frogs, its own hatchlings (Cannibalism), other lizards, and even Iguana faeces (Matyot, 2004).

We report an opportunistic observation pertaining to the diet of *C. versicolor* in an abandoned stone quarry in Pune city (18°32'47.04"N 73°46' 53.53" E). On the 1 June 2010 at 09:09 hrs, an adult male *C. versicolor* was observed feeding on a live juvenile checked keelback water snake *Xenochropis piscator* (Schneider, 1799) on a rocky platform in the quarry (Figure 1, 2). Vegetation of the area predominantly consisted of Bush morning glory *Ipomoea carnea* along the marshy patches and Gum Arabic tree *Acacia nilotica*, Mexican lilac *Gliricidia sepium*, Neem *Azadirachta indica*, Indian jujube *Zizyphus sp.*, Indian mulberry *Morinda tinctoria*, Spanish flag *Lantana camara*, Carrot/Congress grass *Parthenium hysterophorus* and members of the *Poaceae* on the rocky cliffs. The approximate snout vent length (SVL) of the *Calotes* was 120mm and approximate length of the snake was 200mm. The *Calotes* had started eating the snake from the anterior part and immediately upon noticing us, took off with the wriggling snake in its mouth. Sharma (1999) observed for the first time, an instance of *C. versicolor* feeding on a young Indian Wolf snake *Lycodon aulicus* (Linnaeus, 1758). Ours is only the second report of a snake in the diet of *C. versicolor*, and the first record of *Xenochropis piscator* as prey species. Opportunistic reports can provide important dietary records.

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Figure 1, 2 : *C. versicolor* feeding on *Xenochropis piscator*.

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