

King cobra feeding on a monitor lizard at night

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Subjects: King cobra, *Ophiophagus hannah* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Elapidae);
Clouded monitor, *Varanus nebulosus* (Reptilia: Sauria: Varanidae).

Subjects identified by: Ade Kurniawan.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Mandai Lake Road, compound of Night Safari; 3 April 2018; 2030 hrs.

Habitat: Parkland adjacent to secondary forest, on a metaled road.

Observers: Nashruddin bin Tohed & Gladys Lee.

Observation: A king cobra of approximately 3 m total length was observed with its jaws clamped over the head of an apparently lifeless monitor lizard of around 1 m total length (see accompanying picture). Possibly disturbed by the observers, the snake dragged its prey into roadside vegetation. However, the observers did not stay to view the feeding process.

Remarks: Even though the primary diet of king cobras consists of snakes, they are also known to feed on monitor lizards (Das, 2010: 317). Radiographs of a king cobra specimen from Rifle Range Road revealed partially digested *Varanus* sp. remains (Lim et al., 2011: 145). This observation is noteworthy as king cobras are generally believed to be largely diurnal (see Lim et al., 2011: 148).

References:

- Das, I., 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 376 pp.
Lim, K. K. P., Leong, T. M., & F. L. K. Lim, 2011. The king cobra, *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor) in Singapore (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae). *Nature in Singapore*. 4: 143-156.



Lateral view of king cobra feeding on a monitor lizard (right). Photograph by Gladys Lee