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Juvenile *Varanus salvator* Predation on a Common Skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.)

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The water monitor lizard, *Varanus salvator*, is a scavenger and generalist predator known to consume a wide variety of prey (Gaulke & Horn, 2004). Although insects have been documented as the primary diet of juvenile *V. salvator* (Gaulke, 1991; Traeholt, 1994), juvenile *V. salvator* may also hunt small animals such as skinks and frogs (Gaulke, 1991; Losos & Greene, 1988). Here, we note an observation of a juvenile *V.*

salvator preying on a common skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.)

On 17 September 2014 at approximately 1240 h, a juvenile (ca. 0.5 m total length) *V. salvator* was observed on a tree on Tinjil Island, Indonesia with a common skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.) in its mouth. Upon closer observation, it became clear that the skink also held a section of the *V. salvator*'s gular area in its mouth (Fig.



Fig. 1. Juvenile water monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator*) and common skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.) biting each other, Photographed by **Linda Uyeda**.



Fig. 2. A juvenile *V. salvator* moving its head around in an apparent attempt to free itself from the grip of a common skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.), Photographed by **Linda Uyeda**.



Fig. 3. Juvenile *V. salvator* holding a common skink (*Sphenomorphus* sp.) in its mouth, Photographed by Linda Uyeda.

1). Both individuals remained motionless for several minutes, after which time the *V. salvator* reared back and shook its head back and forth in what appeared to be an attempt to shake the skink free. Unsuccessful, the *V. salvator* continued approximately 5 m further up the tree with the skink still in its mouth and with the skink's

mouth still gripping its gular area. The *V. salvator* was then observed maneuvering its head back and forth again, followed by apparent attempts to swallow the skink. Although the *V. salvator* was partially obscured by the tree by this point in the observation, the tail of the skink was still visible. At 1300 h, approximately 20 minutes after the start of the observation, the *V. salvator* moved to a location where it could not be seen, and the observation was concluded. Consumption of the skink was not observed.

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