

## INDIAN TREE FROG *POLYPEDATES MACULATUS* CAPTURING AND SWALLOWING A LIVE GECKO

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Indian Tree Frog *Polypedates maculatus* (Gray, 1830) (Rhacophoridae) is a common arboreal and adaptable species of frog found in varied habitats like forest, shrubland, grassland, wetlands (inland), terrestrial and, artificial, aquatic habitats.

At 19.39 hours on 18.x.2019, PS observed an Indian Tree Frog *Polypedates maculatus* at the Conservation Education Centre, BNHS Nature Reserve (33 acres), which is nestled between the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and the Film City in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The frog was resting on the trunk of a tree. After some time, she returned to check whether the frog was still there. While searching, she saw the frog leaping towards a gecko. The frog caught the gecko and started swallowing it from head to tail. RK also joined in noting down observation and taking photographs. It was seen that even after the frog has swallowed the body of the gecko, the latter's tail was still quivering (see image). It took almost 5-6 minutes for the frog to swallow the gecko. The gecko was possibly a Brook's House Gecko *Hemidactylus brookii* Gray, 1845 (Gekkonidae), which is a common species in the area and based on identification of the tail. The snout to vent length of *P. maculatus* is 7–8 cm (Boulenger, 1890.) whereas the length of body and head of *H. brookii* is 58 mm plus the tail length is 60 mm.

A literature searches (Kanamadi, *et al.*, 1993; Lillywhite, *et al.*, 1997; Lillywhite, *et al.*,

1998) found no information about the diet of adult *P. maculatus*. However, a study about the diet of tadpoles of *P. maculatus* revealed phytoplankton as the main diet (Asrafuzzaman, *et al.*, 2018). However, it may be that *P. maculatus* is an opportunistic predator (Wells, 2007) and this may be a one-time observation.

When contacted, senior herpetologist Dr. Varad Giri (previously Curator at BNHS) informed that there is no previous record of a *P. maculatus* feeding on such a big prey and could be and addition to existing information about the diet of *P. maculatus*.

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Fig.1: *Polypedates maculatus* devouring a gecko