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A live Keeled Skink trapped in the resin at Alipurduar, West Bengal, India

Amber is a fossilized resin from a tree. Organisms getting trapped in the resin and getting preserved for millions of years is a well-known phenomenon. There are a number of records of insects and spiders (Ross 2018), Gekkota (Daza et al. 2014), and lizards (Wanga & Xinga 2020) found preserved in amber. The resin secretion by plants began in the Carboniferous period, about 320 million years ago (Bray & Anderson 2009), but the oldest records of arthropods in amber date to early Cretaceous period, about 130 million years ago when the resins were produced in large quantities. The oldest lizard sample are about 120 million years old (Arnold & Poinar 2008). While these reports furnish information on animals that get engulfed and die by the resin, thereby getting naturally preserved for millions of years, this report is on a different case - one of a large, live adult skink getting entangled in resin drops shed on the ground under the tree.

An adult Keeled Skink entangled in the resin at Alipurduar, West Bengal showing the ventral contact of the skink that had accidentally crossed path on the dropped resin surface.

On 19 May 2006, in Alipurduar town (26.50^{0}N, 89.52^{0}E) in West Bengal, India, an incidence of a skink getting trapped in resin was observed. There was a medium sized tree *Lannea coromandelica* (Houtt.) Merr. in a residential colony, on the roadside. The tree had a broken branch and the resin was dripping from this branch copiously. The skink was in moribund condition as it had got entangled in the resin collected at the base of the tree, on a concrete floor. The ventral surface of the skink was in contact with the collected resin. It was photographed with a Nikon Coolpix camera. The skink was identified as a Keeled Skink *Eutropis carinata* (Schneider, 1801), from the photographs referring the field guide by Purkayastha (2013). The resin had entangled a pseudo-scorpion and a few individuals of *Camponotus* sp. ants around it which were dead by the time. It is unclear if the ants were attracted to the skink or

Resin dripping from the tree *Lannea coromandelica*.

the skink was attempting to eat the insects stuck in the resins. However, the prey and predators were captured together by the resin. The skink's interactions with fresh resin were visible as it might have moved its forelimbs vigorously creating marks in the resin, ultimately got caught in an abnormal position due to exhaustion (Arillo 2007). The scene remained as it was for a week after which I could not do the follow up.

This observation is more or less analogous to a natural 'glue trap' (Ribeiro-Junior et al. 2006). Adlassnig et al. (2010) and Voigt et al. (2015) suggested similar analogies between the secretions of the insectivorous plants and the artificial glues used in animal traps. Very recently, Horvath et al. (2019) explained about the detailed investigations they conducted in simulating tree resins using artificial glues, both aimed at attracting insects. This observation on the skink getting trapped on the sticky surface of fallen resin below a tree, adds one more to such a case.

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