



#245
21 February 2024

Observation of conflict between Common Wolf Snake and Common House Gecko from Talcher, Odisha

The Common Wolf Snake *Lycodon aulicus* is a common non-venomous species found in southern and southeastern Asia (Kramer 1977). *L. aulicus* is particularly known to feed on Common House Geckos *Hemidactylus frenatus* Dumeril & Bibron, 1836 (Daniel 2002) and consequently, it may frequently be seen in and around residential buildings where these prey species are most commonly encountered (Wangyal et al. 2021). We reported an observation where a combat taking place between *H. frenatus* & *L. aulicus* was



Conflict between Common Wolf Snake, *L. aulicus* (Linnaeus, 1758) and Common House Gecko, *H. frenatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1836. Domination of *H. frenatus* over *L. aulicus* is visible. © Sandipt Maharana.

clearly noticeable and that *H. frenatus* was dominating *L. aulicus*.

The first author's neighbour sought help to remove a snake found in her room on 11 October 2021 at Talcher, Odisha, India (21.1446 N, 85.1996 E). After reaching

the spot, we saw a combat occurring between *H. frenatus* & *L. aulicus*. The observed House Gecko was approximately 14 cm in length and the Common Wolf Snake was about 26 cm in length. We advised the crowd to leave the animals for some



time, and the first author observed the species from a distance and took photographs for documentation. Later, we found *H. frenatus* was dominating over *L. aulicus*. After a few minutes, *L. aulicus* was found not responding, but *H. frenatus* was active and took *L. aulicus* behind the bushes through a little hole.

House Geckos are quite territorial. When confronting other members of the same species, *H. frenatus* has violent tendencies and is more aggressive than other gecko species. It is not uncommon for them to approach and bite other geckos. Medium to large geckos may bite if distressed, however their bite is gentle and will not pierce the skin (Ota 1989). Nonetheless, the reason behind the conflict between *H. frenatus* & *L. aulicus* is predicted due to the gecko being a usual source of food for the Common Wolf Snake, but the gecko overpowered and attacked the snake.

References

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Acknowledgements: We are thankful to Team Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation and Earth Crusaders Organisation for their social awareness on wildlife from grassroot level and drafting of this manuscript. We thank Shanti Bhushan Sahoo for reviewing this manuscript. We are thankful to Swarna Samal and Barnava Pattnaik for their suggestions and comments on this manuscript.

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Citation: Maharana, S., A. Samal & S. Pandey (2024). Observation of conflict between Common Wolf Snake and Common House Gecko from Talcher, Odisha. *Reptile Rap* #245, In: *Zoo's Print* 39(2): 04–05.