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Short-nosed Vine Snake preying on a Common Indian Skink in Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha.

Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha, India, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve covering 2,750 km², harbours remarkable herpetofauna diversity. Its snakes include the King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah*, Indian Cobra *Naja naja*, Russell's Viper *Daboia russelii*, Kraits *Bungarus* spp., arboreal vine snakes *Ahaetulla* spp. (Dutta et al. 2009).

On 12 August 2025, a Short-nosed Vine Snake *Ahaetulla prasina* was observed preying on an adult Common Indian Skink *Eutropis carinata*, at Baghanta area of Similipal Tiger Reserve, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha, (21.588° N, 86.413° E). The snake was spotted hanging from a thin branch of a shrub, about 1.5 m above the ground, using its prehensile body to anchor itself while extending its anterior body towards the prey. It had seized the skink by the head, employing precise jaw alignment to immobilize it, and was in the



Short-nosed Vine Snake preying on Common Indian Skink.
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process of methodically subduing and swallowing the lizard head-first, an efficient strategy that minimizes resistance from the limbs and scales of the prey. The event was documented photographically, confirming identification of both predator and prey.



The Short-nosed Vine Snake is an arboreal, diurnal colubrid with a distribution spanning southeast Asia and northeastern India (Whitaker & Captain 2004; Das 2010). It is primarily a visually oriented predator, feeding largely on lizards, frogs, and occasionally small birds. This observation confirms that the species' diet primarily consists of lizards, with the Common Indian Skink being a significant prey species in the Similipal landscape.

Notably, *A. prasina* was only recently reported as a new state record and range extension from northeastern India to Odisha, based on photographic and morphological evidence from Similipal (Gogineni et al. 2024). That study marked the first confirmed occurrence of the species in Odisha, extending its known range considerably south-eastward from its previously established distribution in the north-east. This predation record thus not only adds to the

trophic ecology data of *A. prasina* in Similipal but also reinforces its successful establishment in this new range, highlighting its role in regulating semi-arboreal lizard populations in the reserve.

References

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Editor's Note: The northeast Indian population of the short-nosed vine snake *Ahaetulla prasina* complex, has recently been reclassified and revised as *Ahaetulla flavescens* (Wall, 1910), which name we advocate for the snake involved in the above observation (fide, Srikanthan et al. 2022).

Srikanthan, A. N., Adhikari, O. D., Kumar Mallik, A., Campbell, P. D., Bhushan Bhatt, B., Shanker, K., & Rajagopalan Ganesh, S. (2022). Taxonomic reevaluation of the *Ahaetulla prasina* (H. Boie in F. Boie, 1827) complex from Northeast India: resurrection and redescription of *Ahaetulla flavescens* (Wall, 1910) (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae). *European Journal of Taxonomy*, 839, 120–148.

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