



COMMON SKINK *Eutropis carinata* (REPTILIA: SCINCIDAE) FEED ON ENDEMIC SEMI-SLUG *Ratnadvipia irriadians* (LIMACOIDEA: ARIOPHANTIDAE)

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The skinks belong to the genus *Eutropis* is widely distributed in South and South East Asia and is represented in Sri Lanka by seven species, the largest and the most common of which is common skink *Eutropis carinata* (Schneider, 1801) (Das *et al.*, 2008). In Sri Lanka *E. carinata* is widely distributed in open areas, closed canopy forest, home gardens and plantations in wet and dry zones below 1,000 m altitude (Das & de Silva, 2005). The Sri Lankan endemic semi-slug genus *Ratnadvipia* consists of two species, *Ratnadvipia irriadians* (Pfeiffer, 1853) and *Ratnadvipia karui* Raheem & Naggs, 2006. *Ratnadvipia* is almost exclusively confined to the tropical lowland rain forests, intermediate zone and up to the suitable habitats within the dry zone (Raheem & Naggs, 2006). Although snails are usually not an item of skink diet, we have observed a semi-slug in *E. carinata* gut.

On 30th December 2008, a dry sunny day, first author found a dead (road kill) of *Eutropis carinata* adult male (snout-vent length 143 mm, tail length 202 mm) on the rocky road at Morningside area, Ratnapura District (06°24'N, 80°38'E, altitude 1030 m) at 07:15 hr (temperature 23 °C, humidity 69%). The specimen was fresh with severe head damage. The abdomen of the skink was dissected and investigated the gut contents. The lumen of the stomach consisted of an undigested adult specimen of *Ratnadvipia irriadians* (total length of the body: about 60 mm, maximum width of the shell: about 18 mm) (Fig. 1) in addition to six half digested Coleopterans.

We have frequently observed *R. irriadians* at Morningside Forest. This species is mostly observed on the leaves of cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*) bushes, on shrubs as well as on rotting

logs at night (normally 0.5-2 m high) also during the dry season under leaf litter, under rocks and inside rotting logs (Bahir and Gabadage Pers. com. Feb. 2009). *E. carinata* is commonly found under leaf litter and observed on rock surfaces, but we have not previously observed this skink feeding on *R. irriadians* or on any other land snails. Additionally we observed a live *R. irriadians* on the scats of a Golden Jackal, *Canis aureus lanka* on the same road (Fig. 2). The scats were wet and with a fungus growth. Although we could not verify that *Ratnadvipia* feeding on jackal scat, it may have been feeding on the fungus.

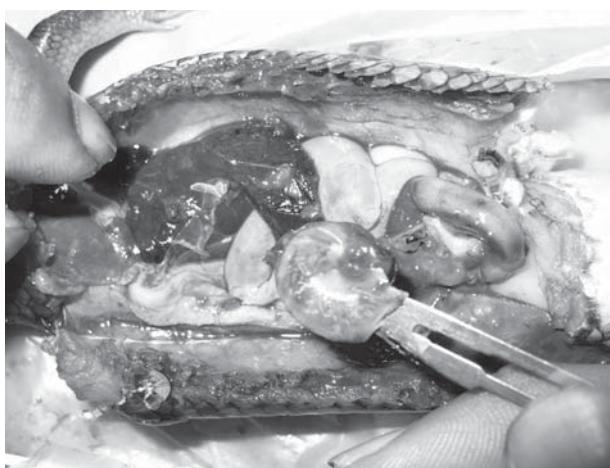


Fig. 01: undigested adult specimen of *R. irriadians*



Fig. 02: *R. irriadians* on the scats of Jackal

This is the first observation of *E. carinata* feeding on a land snail *R. irriadians*. Further investigation is needed to establish if *R. irriadians* is a regular item of the diet of *E. carinata* and to clarify what *R. irriadians* feeds when on Jackal scats. Data on the diet and feeding habits of Sri Lankan and South Asian land snails or skinks are sparse and further observations are needed to verify their feeding habits. It is interesting to examine food and feeding habits of *E. carinata* on its range especially in

mainland India. Since *Ratnadvipia* is endemic to Sri Lanka, it is worthwhile to study the feeding interactions between this endemic semi-slug and other skinks in general including *E. carinata*.

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