



OVIPOSITIONAL BEHAVIOR OF *Calotes ceylonensis* MÜLLER, 1887 (REPTILIA: AGAMIDAE) OBSERVED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This is the first documented observation of the oviposition of *Calotes ceylonensis*. The ovipositional behavior consisted of digging of the hole nest to lay the eggs; the laying of the eggs; the scraping of the soil to bury the eggs; the filling of the spaces between the eggs, and the hole nest; the tight compression of the soil, and camouflage the nest.

Keywords: Agamidae, Draconinae, *Calotes ceylonensis*, Egg-laying behaviour, Sri Lanka, Conservation.

Introduction

There are eighteen species of agamid lizards in Sri Lanka, fifteen (83.33%) of them are endemic to the island (Manamendra-Arachchi *et al.*, 2006). Seven species out of them belong to the genus *Calotes*. Five of them (*C. ceylonensis* Müller, 1887; *C. liocephalus* Günther, 1872; *C. liolepis* Boulenger, 1885; *C. nigrilabris* Peters, 1860; *C. desilvai* Bahir & Maduwage, 2005) are endemic. The remaining two, *Calotes calotes* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *C. versicolor* Daudin, 1802 are probably widespread species throughout South East Asia (Taylor, 1953).

According to the published literature, *Calotes ceylonensis* is a largely arboreal species found only from the low country dry and intermediate zones below 500 m a.s.l (Karunarathna *et al.*, 2009). It is rare and a vulnerable species (Bahir & Surasinghe, 2005; Manamendra-Arachchi & Liyanage, 1994; IUCNSL & MENR, 2007).

The information available on this species is scarce and, therefore, further studies on their behaviour and ecology are needed, which may be very important for the conservation of the species