Highlights

A Herper's Lifer Stories

Liphistids or Trap-door Spiders

Pictorial Guide to Chick-development of the Yellow-vented Bulbul

Otters of Greater Ulu Muda Reserve

Brief Introduction to Local Spiders: The Eight-legged Wonder

Some Delectable Wild Fruits of Johore
The Black-thighed Falconet (Microhierax fringillarius) has been described as one of the world's smallest raptors, at 14-17cm body length, or roughly the size of a sparrow. Unsurprisingly, its diet comprises invertebrates and small vertebrates— insects and lizards— although there is a record of Black-capped Babbler (Pellorneum capistratum), that measures 16-17cm, in its diet. There is also a record of a Pygmy Squirrel (Exilisciurus exilis), which measures about 12cm including tail, being shared by two birds.

On 16 May 2015, at 10:33:30h, a falconet was observed flying to a tree trunk at a recreational park near the Sama Jaya Nature Reserve, a small area of heath forest located in the western fringes of Kuching City, in Sarawak State. It had a small lizard in its bill. The action was frozen with a shutterspeed of 1/5000 sec using a Canon EOS 1D X camera, mounted with a EF500mm f4/L ISII USM lens. A ca. 4cm diameter nest hole was visible on this tree, about 260cm above ground.
The adult bird was presumably coming in to feed her chicks in the nest - revealed by a circa 4cm diameter hole in the tree stem, through which two chicks were observed. The prey was identified as a flying lizard (genus Draco; family Agamidae). The tan dorsum and bright yellow dewlap identifies it as a Common Flying Lizard (Draco sumatranus), a diurnal species common in the forest edges locally, and distributed over Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore, Sumatra, the Mentawai and Riau Archipelagos, Borneo and Palawan. Extensive herpetological surveys at the site indicate no other species of congener at this site. Sama Jaya Nature Reserve is itself is surrounded by housing and other development, that has led to the loss of natural vegetation within tens of square kilometres of the surrounding area, and is one of few remnant natural forests in the greater Kuching area.

The current record is a rare observation of both the nest of a Black-thighed Falconet and the presumed feeding of the chicks with a flying lizard. 🦉

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