

## Predation attempt by Tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*) on Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* in the Philippines

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**Observer:** Krizler C. Tanalgo.  
**Photograph by:** Krizler C. Tanalgo.  
**Subjects identified by:** Emerson Y. Sy.

**Location:** Barangay Bagumbayan, Municipality of Tulunan, North Cotabato Province, Mindanao Island, Philippines.

**Elevation:** 26 metres.

**Habitat:** Residential area.

**Date and time:** 02 October 2017, 19:00 to 20:00 hrs.

**Identity of subjects:**

- (i) Tokay gecko, *Gekko gecko* (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkonidae).
- (ii) Olive-backed Sunbird, *Cinnyris jugularis* (Aves: Passeriformes: Nectariniidae).

**Description of record:** A male Olive-backed Sunbird accidentally entered through a small opening on the roof of a wooden house, in which two resident Tokay geckos were present. One of the geckos noticed the bird as it attempted frantically to leave the house for approximately 20 minutes. The gecko positioned itself near the opening on the roof and waited for the bird to come closer. As the bird got within its reach, the gecko bit the right wing of the bird and held on for approximately five minutes (Fig. 1). While the gecko attempted to reposition its bite on the wing, the bird was able to escape and fly out of the house.



Fig. 1.

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**Remarks:** The gecko was identified as *Gekko gecko* based on (i) its large size, (ii) greyish-brown colour, (iii) enlarged tubercles and red spots on the dorsum and (iv) white bands on the tail (Brown and Alcala, 1978). The bird was identified as *Cinnyris jugularis* based on (i) beak is slender and slightly curved, (ii) throat is dark metallic purplish blue, (iii) underpart is yellow and (iv) tail colour is black, the outer tail is black with white tips, and no white tip in central tail feathers (Kennedy *et al.*, 2000).

The Tokay gecko has a wide distributional range in South Asia, mainland and insular Southeast Asia, and throughout the Philippines. It is an ubiquitous species in both disturbed and forest areas and is known to feed primarily on insects. Aside from invertebrates, the Tokay gecko has also been documented to prey on vertebrates such as juvenile snakes (Love, 2000) and juvenile house rats (Bucol and Alcala, 2013). This observation illustrates that Tokay geckos will also prey on small birds opportunistically.

**References:**

Brown, W.C. and Alcala, A.C. (1978). *Philippine lizards of the family Gekkonidae*. Silliman University Press, Dumaguete City, Philippines. 146 pp.

Bucol, A. and Alcala, A. (2013). Tokay gecko, *Gekko gecko* (Sauria: Gekkonidae) predation on juvenile house rats. *Herpetology Notes* 6: 307-308.

Kennedy, R.S., Gonzales, P.C., Dickinson, E.C., Miranda, H.C. Jr., Fisher, T.H. (2000). *A guide to the birds of the Philippines*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom. xx + 369 pp.

Love, B. (2000). *Gekko gecko* (Tokay Gecko) predation. *Herpetological Review* 31(3): 174.