



A Tale of Two Tails: Tail Bifurcation in the Common House Gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus* (Duméril and Bibron 1836), in Bangladesh

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Tail bifurcation occurs when the tail duplicates as it regrows after any mechanical damage. This is relatively rare in nature (Kornilev et al. 2018), although tail bifurcation has been reported in a number of amphibian and reptilian species (e.g., Ananjeva and Danov 1991; Kumbar et al. 2011; Mitchell et al. 2012; Conzendey et al. 2013; Cordes and Walker 2013; Martins et al. 2013; Mata-Silva et al. 2013; Vrcibradic and Niemeyer 2013; Dudek and Ekner-Grzyb 2014; Passos et al. 2014; Plessey et al. 2014; Pelegrin and Leão 2016; Hass et al.

2018). Tail bifurcation often is a consequence of caudal autotomy, a defensive mechanism used mainly by salamanders and lizards in which a portion of the tail is detached in response to a predation attempt (e.g., Meyer et al. 2002; Bateman and Fleming 2009; Vitt and Caldwell 2009). Tail bifurcation in Common House Geckos (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) has been reported only five times throughout the world (Chan et al. 1984; Khan 2004; García-Vinalay et al. 2017; Heyborne and Mehan 2017; Maria and Razi 2018).

Hemidactylus frenatus is the most abundant gecko in Bangladesh (Khan 2004; Hasan et al. 2014; Khandakar et al. 2020), where it is widely distributed in diverse habitats, including forests and human settlements in both rural and urban areas (Hasan 2015; Khandakar et al. 2020). At 2028 h on 8 February 2020, we observed a gecko about 5 m above the ground on the wall of the IUCN field office in the Nijhum Dweep National Park and Marine Protected Area in Bangladesh (22.07625°N, 91.05952E). This 163.52-km² coastal island with a planted mangrove ecosystem is located in the northern portion of the lower Meghna Estuary and south of Hatiya Island in the Bay of Bengal (Iftekhar and Takama 2008; Hossain et al. 2016; Sultana et al. 2020). Upon closer observation, we noticed that this gecko had a bifurcated tail, with the additional tail 5 mm from the tip of the main tail (Fig. 1). This note is the third report of tail bifurcation in *H. frenatus* in Bangladesh.

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Fig. 1. A Common House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) with a bifurcated tail. Photographs by Naim Khandakar.

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