



Feeding Behavior of the Mizo Rainsnake, *Smithophis atemporalis* (Squamata: Natricidae), in Mizoram, India

Lal Muansanga and H.T. Lalremsanga

Department of Zoology, Mizoram University, Aizawl, 796004, Mizoram, India (muanapunte16@gmail.com)

The Mizo Rainsnake (*Smithophis atemporalis*) is one of two species in a poorly known natricid genus that was recently described from Mizoram, India (Giri et al. 2019). It is most frequently encountered during the monsoon season and has been observed feeding on juvenile skinks and earthworms in nature and on the eggs of the Bangladeshi Cricket Frog (*Minervarya asmata*) in captivity (Giri et al. 2019). It is oviparous, laying a maximum of four eggs in a clutch, and occurs at an elevational range of 71–1,235 m asl (Remruatpuii et al. 2020).

At 2327 h on 27 July 2020, we observed a female *Smithophis atemporalis* (SVL 437 mm) feeding on an earthworm (*Eutyphoeus* sp.; total length 263 mm) in the middle of a road surrounded by secondary forest used as a plantation (23.6644°N, 092.7236°E; WSG 84; elev. 818 m). The

earthworm had crawled onto the road and was quickly followed by the snake. The snake bit the earthworm (Fig. 1) and struggled with it for about 5 min while slowly working its way to the posterior end of its prey before swallowing it. The elapsed time from strike to complete ingestion was about 14 min. The snake was not disturbed while feeding but was subsequently collected for measurements before being released the next day. This is the first documentation of the feeding behavior of this species in nature.

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Fig. 1. A Mizo Rainsnake (*Smithophis atemporalis*) feeding on an earthworm (*Eutyphoeus* sp.) in Mizoram, India. Photograph by Lal Muansanga.

Literature Cited

- Giri, V.B., D.J. Gower, A. Das, H.T. Lalremsanga, S. Lalronunga, A. Captain, and V. Deepak. 2019. A new genus and species of natricine snake from northeast India. *Zootaxa* 4303: 241–264.
- Remruatpuii, Lalbiakzuala, and H.T. Lalremsanga. 2020. *Smithophis atemporalis* (Mizo Rain Snake). Reproduction and elevation. *Herpetological Review* 51: 156–157.