

Herpetological Review

CALOTES "VERSICOLOR" (Burmese Garden Lizard). **GLID-ING**. During surveys of the Burmese herpetofauna (NSF DEB-9971861, DEB-0451832),

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CALOTES "VERSICOLOR" (Burmese Garden Lizard). **GLID-
ING.** During surveys of the Burmese herpetofauna (NSF DEB-
9971861, DEB-0451832), we periodically sampled the components

of the Hlawga Wildlife Park fauna (17.043°N, 96.1271667°E; Yangon Division, Myanmar). On 28 February 2009, we focused on the lizard *C. "versicolor"* (Quotes indicate the population is a member of this species group; true *C. versicolor* does not occur in Myanmar.), and discovered that members of the Hlawga population glide. Hlawga *C. "versicolor"* are wary and typically take evasive action when a person approaches within 4–5 m of "their" tree. These lizards are sit-and-wait predators, and typically cling to the sides of trees, usually 1–2 m from the tree base. When a potential predator approaches, evasive action begins with a slight upward movement around the tree, apparently in an effort to escape detection. If pursued, even slowly, they continue to circle the tree trunk, constantly moving upward. Our observation concerns an adult on a tree isolated in a grassy patch. As we approached, the lizard immediately climbed to nearly 3 m. Being the dry season, the tree was leafless. A park ranger decided to aid capture by climbing the tree. The lizard continued to the top (about 12 m); at about 10 m, the tree was too slender for the ranger to reach the lizard, so he chopped off the tree top and moved slowly and held the top horizontal. We expected the lizard to simply drop directly downward; instead it leaped outward and descended at roughly 45°, landing in a brush pile and eluding capture. The descent angle alone does not imply gliding, but in association with the lizard's deliberate vertical outward leap and its posture of straight body and head with outstretched fore- and hindlimbs, dorsoventrally flattened trunk, and tail held straight backward (rigidly so, i.e., no movement), the controlled descent can be defined as gliding behavior.

Gliding is certainly not an unknown agamid behavior owing to the spectacular gliding performance of the various species of *Draco*, but it has not been reported in other agamid taxa except *Bronchocela cristatella* (Allen 1957. Malayan Nat. J. 11:81; Reid 1958. Malayan Nat. J. 12:119). Both of these reports note that the lizard was observed to leap outward and descent vertically from its origin at a roughly 40–45° angle. We suggest that these and other species of lighter-bodied arboreal agamids may use this mode of escape, but that it would be rarely seen and uncommonly used because these lizards are often successful at eluding capture by climbing, hiding, or jumping short distances to other trees.

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