

HEMIDACTYLUS FRENATUS (Asian House Gecko). **PREY.** *Hemidactylus frenatus* is primarily an oriental species, but has spread (often human-mediated) pantropically and its introduced range currently includes parts of South-East Asia, Japan, parts of central America, Mexico, some localities in southern USA, Madagascar, parts of Africa, Australia, and many islands of the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic oceans (Case et al. 1994. Ecology. 75:464-477; Rödder et al. 2008. North-Western J. Zool. 4:236-246; Hoskin 2011. Austral Ecol. 36:240-251). In Taiwan, this gecko species occurs at altitudes below 1000 m island-wide and on the outlying islets (Lue et al. 2002. The Transition Kingdom — Guidebook of Amphibians and Reptiles of Taiwan. SWAN, Taipei, Taiwan. 347 pp. [in Chinese]).

At ca. 1950 h on 20 August 2013, while preparing the rooftop garden of his residence in Yilan City, northeastern Taiwan (24.7505556°N, 121.7613889°E; datum: WGS84 elev. = 13 m) for Typhoon Trami that was expected to pass the area the next day, JJM disturbed a resting Globe Skimmer (*Pantala flavescens*) when he turned on an outdoor light. The insect flew to the light, where it was grasped by the head by an adult *H. frenatus* specimen that was sheltering behind the light (Fig.1). The observations were discontinued at ca. 2030 h, at which point the gecko was still trying to ingest the dragonfly.

Both within its native range and areas where it has been introduced, *H. frenatus* is a nocturnal species that is often attracted to indoor and outdoor lights in areas disturbed by anthropogenic activities, where they can easily feed on insects that are also attracted to the lights (Newberry and Jones 2007. In 'Pest or Guest: The Zoology of Overabundance'. Eds D. Lunney, P. Eby, P. Hutchings and S. Burgin. pp. 59–65. (Royal Zoological

Society of New South Wales: Sydney, Australia.); Vanderduys and Kutt 2012. Australian J. Zool. 60:361-367). For such a small-sized lizard, the adults of *H. frenatus* appear to be adept at preying on relatively large prey items. There have been reports of individuals preying on conspecific hatchlings, the hatchlings and juveniles of *Lepidodactylus lugubris*, as well as on *Nactus coindemirensis* of unknown sizes (McCoid and Hensley 1993. Herpetol. Rev. 24:87-88; Cole et al. 2005. Biol. Conservation 125:467-474). Petren and Case (1996. Ecology. 77:118-132) also noted that *H. frenatus* males in particular, are good at preying on large roaches, and we have observed an adult *H. frenatus* specimen preying on an adult American Cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*) (Norval and Mao 2013. IRCF Reptiles & Amphibians. 20:140-142). The dragonfly described herein is thus yet another example of a relatively large prey item captured, and presumed consumed, by an adult *H. frenatus*. However, because dragonflies are diurnal and alert insects, they are unlikely typical prey for *H. frenatus*. Nevertheless, in some instances dragonflies are attracted to outdoor lights in residential areas, especially if the residential area is located near a wetland or prior to rains (JJM and GN, pers. obs.), and under such conditions predation on dragonflies by geckos is possible, as reported herein. The observations described herein therefore not only again raise the question of size and shape limits of prey that can be utilized by *H. frenatus*, but also highlight the opportunistic nature of these lizards.

GERRUT NORVAL, Applied Behavioural Ecology & Ecosystem Research Unit, Department of Environmental Sciences, UNISA, Private Bag X6, Florida, 1710, Republic of South Africa, (e-mail: gnorval@gmail.com); and **JEAN-JAY MAO**, Department of

Forestry & Natural Resources, National Ilan University, No 1, Sec. 1, Shen-Lung Rd.,
Ilan, 260, Taiwan, R.O.C., (e-mail: jjmao@niu.edu.tw).



Fig. 1. The *Hemidactylus frenatus* with *Pantala flavescens* (Globe Skimmer) captured at night near an outdoor light.