VOL. 82 | NO. 5
MAY 2020

THE AMERICAN BIOLOGY TEACHER

About Our Cover

The golden tree snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*) of Southeast Asia is a member of the largest family of snakes, the rear-fanged Colubridae. *Chrysopelea* is unique in its ability to glide, which is why it is often called the flying tree snake. This gliding ability provides the appearance of effortless movement from tree to tree, with fast motions and the ability to climb vertically using keeled or ridged ventral scales called gastrosteges that help with grip. Contraction of its belly surface forms a concave depression along the snake's body length, mimicking a parachute by increasing air resistance when the snake launches itself to the ground. S-shaped undulations and tail movements provide stability while in the air.

The attractive striping pattern of the golden tree snake makes it desirous for captivity displays, increasing its involvement in the exotic pet trade. However, these snakes are skittish in temperament, and breeding in captivity is difficult.

Ubiquitous in Thailand, these mildly venomous beauties eat anything from geckos and insects to small rodents. Photographer Jeremiah Boulware happened to come across this particular golden tree snake under a bridge in the suburbs of Bangkok, feasting on an unidentified species of bat.

Contents

In our April 2020 issue, we incorrectly spelled the last name of author Kristy Daniel in the Table of Contents. We apologize for this error.