

# LIVING WORLD

Journal of the Trinidad and Tobago

Field Naturalists' Club

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ISSN 1029-3299



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

## Gecko Preying on a Rufous-breasted

## Hummingbird *Glaucis hirsuta insularum*

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Kelly, M. 2010. Gecko Preying on a Rufous-breasted Hummingbird *Glaucis hirsuta insularum*. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2010, 87-87.

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## Gecko Preying on a Rufous-breasted Hummingbird *Glaucis hirsuta insularum*

Victor Quensel's gecko report (2008), brought to mind an incident which I witnessed at our home near Parlatuvier, Tobago.

On 14 March, 2006, around 1400 h a Rufous-breasted Hermit hummingbird (*Glaucis hirsuta insularum*) flew into the house, and despite my efforts to open all of the windows and doors and to let it out, the bird would only fly back and forth along the top of the high ceiling of the main room of the house. The main room has two lights hanging on wires from the ceiling, one at each end. The bird flew back and forth, landing on one vertical wire, then the next, back and forth.

As the nearly exhausted bird perched on one of the wires, I noticed an abrupt movement from the nearby woodwork on the ceiling. Suddenly, a large house gecko *Thecadactylus rapicauda*, locally known as "Woodslave" leaped 1 to 1.5 m through the air, from its unseen perch, literally "out of the woodwork" from the ceiling, down on to the wire, and tackled the hummingbird! They fell about 5 m to the ground, rolling and tussling as they hit the hard tiled floor. The gecko bit and tore savagely at the bird, rapidly and violently shaking and battering the bird against the floor. The gecko probably would have decimated the hapless hummingbird had I not ran over to

intervene, removing the reptilian predator from the bird. The gecko swiftly escaped, as I was more concentrated on the now comatose bird.

I was stunned at what I had just witnessed. The gecko was a large one which I estimated to be about 15 cm (snout to tail tip). It had a plump body, and a stout tail, more bulging at the base of the tail. Though the Rufous-breasted Hermit can reach an average size of 13 cm, this particular bird was smaller, about 9 cm (snout to vent, not counting long beak). The bird eventually revived and flew away.

### REFERENCES

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