

**Doon Watch Nature Series for Dehradun Live Hindustan Times  
by Sanjay Sondhi**

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**The Girgit and the Ants**

Yesterday, my morning walk in our society has been “brightened” by a colourful Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*, also commonly called the Girgit. I spotted a male girgit sitting on a bush with lovely yellowish-green leaves. The girgit's colour, too, was a yellowish-green, matching its surroundings! I had been on the lookout for the girgit during the months of July and August, as during these months, many of these lizards turn a lovely green colour, as opposed to its normal colour which is different shades of brown.

I rushed indoors, fetched my camera, and proceeded to squeeze off a few shots. At first, the lizard was wary, and scrambled from the leaves of the bush, to the vertical trunk of a nearby tree. Here the lizard, froze and so did I, hoping that the lizard would get used to my presence. Wary looks apart, neither of us moved for a few minutes, as the lizard and I played the “statue” game! Soon I observed, that the lizard was no longer threatened by me, and began to examine his surroundings. Along the trunk, a series of black ants worked their way to their daily chores. Suddenly, the lizard was interested. Aha-a meal beckons! As the ants moved along the trunk, one of them climbed onto the lizard, and moved along its body, mistaking it for the tree trunk! Soon another ant followed-adding insult to injury!

By now, I was forgotten, and lizard busied itself to take revenge. Watching the ants closely, the lizard followed their movements up the tree trunk. The next ant to mistake the lizard for the tree trunk had it coming. The ant walked onto the body of the lizard from near its tail, and



clambered off the lizard near its mouth. A quick lunge, and the lizard gobbled up the

ant! Chew, chew, chew, and soon the ant was gone. Over the next 5 minutes, the lizard gobbled up three more ants. By this time, it seemed that the ants had wisened up too, and for the next few minutes that I observed this encounter, no more ants ventured onto the lizard. In just a few minutes of observation, I had watched a little story of the predator and its prey unfold before my very eyes-isn't nature wonderful!

Feedback on this column is welcome at [sanjay.sondhi@gmail.com](mailto:sanjay.sondhi@gmail.com)

Making a difference: Little things can make a difference. I am an avid coffee drinker and consume 4 to 5 cups a day. A simple thing that I try to do is to wash the tea spoon that I have used to add coffee or sugar, as soon as I have finished stirring my coffee, instead of leaving the spoon to be washed later. Not only do I use less water when I do this, I don't need to use any detergent either!

Photograph caption: Girgit chomping on an ant

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