

Python devours wallaby in giant meal: Australian ranger

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A python begins to swallow a wallaby at Nitmiluk National Park in Australia's Northern Territory on December 29, 2014

An Australian ranger has captured the moment a python swallowed a wallaby at a national park in a giant feast that could keep it full for three months.

Ranger Paul O'Neill was patrolling Nitmiluk National Park in the Northern Territory when he heard numerous birds making alarm calls and came across the feeding frenzy.

"I saw at first a snake, an olive [python](#), but then on closer inspection I realised it had just... killed a young joey and was just about to start to devour it," O'Neill told AFP of his discovery Monday.

He said the medium-build python, a constrictor, was between 2.5 to three metres (8.2 to 9.8 feet) long.

"That would be the largest-size prey that a snake of that size could take," O'Neill, who documented the digesting process in a series of photographs, said.

"And whilst I watched it devouring it, which took about 40 minutes, it really did struggle until it got over the hump of the belly and then it slid down, so that feed is going to last that [snake](#) for a good two to three months.

"That lump will take roughly 24 hours, maybe a bit more, to disappear so it breaks that food down quite quickly, but then it will just be virtually hibernating for a month," he said.

The python would have most likely caught its prey by lunging at and then coiling around the [wallaby](#) while it was eating fruits that had fallen from a plum tree, before squeezing it to death, he added.

The olive python is one of Australia's largest snakes and can grow to 4.5 metres and weigh up to 20 kilograms (44 pounds). It is a non-venomous, mostly nocturnal reptile found in arid to sub-humid areas of northern Australia.



A python swallows a wallaby at Nitmiluk National Park in Australia's Northern Territory on December 29, 2014

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