

LAMPROPELTIS POLYZONA (Milksnake). **PREDATION.** It is well known that numerous birds prey on snakes. *Buteo jamaicensis* (Red-tailed Hawks) are known to be generalists, preying on a variety of small and medium mammals, some birds and reptiles; *Accipiter cooperi* (Cooper's Hawks) however, prey primarily on birds; *Buteo plagiatus* (Gray Hawks) prey on lizards, insects and small rodents (Dunn and Alderfer [eds.] 2011. Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 6th ed. National Geographic Society, Washington, DC. 576 pp.). Here, we report an account of predation on *Lampropeltis polyzona* involving these three raptor species in the municipality of Xalisco, Nayarit, Mexico.

On 27 February 2014, a juvenile *L. polyzona* was observed being taken from the ground by an *A. cooperi* in the locality of El Pantanal in the municipality of Xalisco, Nayarit, Mexico (21.417950°N, 104.826449°W, WGS84; elev. 922 m). As the Cooper's Hawk flew with its prey, a *B. plagiatus* knocked the snake back down to the ground. A few seconds later, a *B. jamaicensis* swooped down to the ground, picked up the dead snake, and flew off with the prey. The area surrounding the road was tropical secondary vegetation and sugar cane fields.

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LEPTODEIRA ANNULATA (Banded Cat-eyed Snake). **DIET.** *Leptodeira annulata* is a medium-sized (total length to 600 mm), arboreal, and nocturnal species (Vitt 1996. Herpetol. Nat. Hist. 4:69–76; Ávila and Morais 2007. Herpetol. Rev. 38:278–280), with a wide distribution from Mexico to eastern South America (Duellman 1958. Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 5:114–152; Rodrigues 2003. In Leal et al. [eds.], Ecología e Conservação da Caatinga, pp. 181–236. Ecologia e Conservação da Caatinga, Editora Universitária, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil). The diet is composed mainly of anurans especially those in the families Bufonidae, Hylidae, Leptodactylidae, and Microhylidae (Vitt, *op. cit.*; Cantor and Pizzatto 2008. Herpetol. Rev. 39:462–463). On 29 October 2010, at 2100 h, in Fortuna II farm (9.820056°S, 58.460722°W, WGS 69; elev. 225 m), municipality of Cotriguaçu, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, we observed an adult *L. annulata* amidst leaf litter ingesting an adult *Leptodactylus mystaceus* (Fig. 1). The frog was caught headfirst, and ingestion

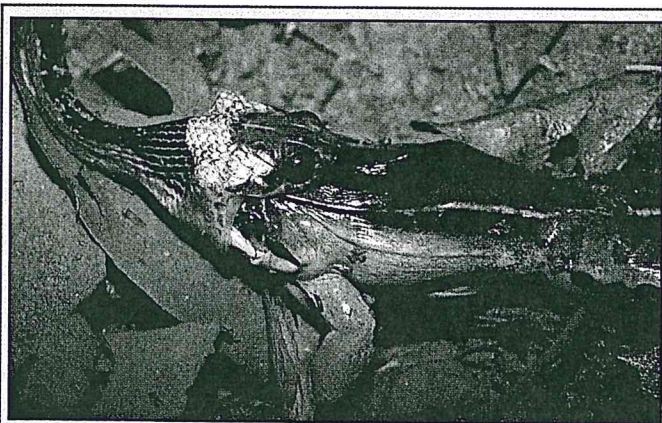


FIG 1. An adult *Leptodeira annulata* preying upon *Leptodactylus mystaceus*, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil.

took 10 min. Anurans are important prey for a wide variety of vertebrate and invertebrate predators (Toledo et al. 2007. J. Zool. 271:170–177; Oliveira et al. 2013. Herpetol. Notes 6:299–300). Several species of amphibians have been reported as prey of *L. annulata* (Mesquita et al. 2013. Pap. Avul. Zool. 53:99–113; Nascimento et al. 2013. Herpetol. Bras. 2:20–22; Santos-Silva et al. 2014. Herpetol. Notes 7:123–126). Due to their wide distribution and abundance, *Leptodactylus* spp. may represent a significant prey resource for snakes.

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NINIA HUDSONI (Hudson's Coffee Snake). **MAXIMUM SIZE.** *Ninia hudsoni* is a small, leaf litter-inhabiting snake found in the Amazon basin of Ecuador, Peru, and Guyana (Valencia et al. 2009. Herpetozoa 21:190–192). The largest specimen of *N. hudsoni* previously known was 419 mm total length and was collected in Ecuador (Valencia et al., *op. cit.*). On 7 July 2013, I collected a female *N. hudsoni* (Fig. 1) that measured 427 mm total length (SVL = 338 mm; tail length = 89 mm; 21 g). The specimen was found in a pile of wooden boards at approximately 1030 h CST in lower montane secondary forest at Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary in eastern Napo Province, Ecuador (0.68745°S, 77.60076°W, WGS84; elev. 1427 m). The specimen (QCAZ 11991) was deposited in the Museo de Zoología of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador in Quito.

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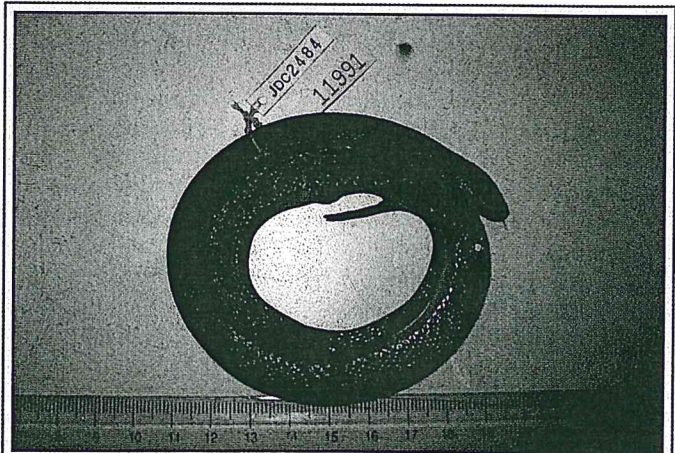


FIG. 1. Dorsal view of an extremely large *Ninia hudsoni* (QCAZ 11991) from Napo Province, Ecuador.

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OPHEODRYS VERNALIS (Smooth Greensnake). **NEST SITE SELECTION.** *Opheodrys vernalis* is a poorly known colubrid with a patchy, largely boreal distribution in the United States (Ernst and Ernst 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Press, Washington, D.C. 668 pp.). This snake is considered primarily terrestrial, showing little inclination to climb (Conant and Collins 1998. A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America. 3rd ed., expanded. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Massachusetts. 616 pp.). Reported nest sites have been limited to terrestrial habitats, such as rotting logs (Cook 1964. Herpetologica 20:206), sandy soils (Fowler 1966. Herpetologica 22:231), grassy fields (Sexton and Claypool 1978. J. Nat. Hist. 12:365–370), and garbage bags (Lawson 1983. Herpetol. Rev. 14:20). Here we report an arboreal oviposition site for *O. vernalis*.

At 920 h on 27 May 2013, in the northwestern part of the Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., Rector, Pennsylvania, USA (40.163707°N, 79.267080°W, WGS84; elev. 460 m), we captured a gravid female *O. vernalis* (SVL = 35 cm; tail length = 14.5 cm; 6 oviductal eggs) on a tree, emerging from a crevice of decaying bark, 1.5 m above the ground (Fig. 1). At 1020 h on 4 June 2013 the female was recaptured at the same location. Upon recapture, the female was no longer gravid and a clutch of eggs was observed inside the opening in the tree. During release of this individual, a second gravid female *O. vernalis* (SVL = 35.5 cm; tail length = 14 cm; 8 oviductal eggs) was detected in the same crevice of the tree. Neither female was recaptured during subsequent surveys at the site. Yet, a larger assemblage of eggs (> 6) was observed in the tree crevice after the second female was released, likely indicating communal nesting. To avoid disruption of natural embryonic development, the eggs in the tree were not counted or moved.

Communal nesting is common in *Opheodrys* spp. (Graves and Duvall 1995. Herpetol. Monogr. 9:102–119). However, oviposition sites differ between species and likely reflect the arboreal or terrestrial lifestyles of *O. aestivus* (Rough Green Snake) and *O. vernalis*, respectively. Nest sites of *O. aestivus* have been characterized as narrow vertical slits in tree interiors as a result of rotting (Plummer 1990. Herpetologica 46:190–195). The arboreal



FIG. 1. Gravid female *Opheodrys vernalis*, exhibiting arboreal behavior leading to a previously undocumented nest site for the species, Westmoreland Co., Rector, Pennsylvania, USA.

nesting behavior and nest sites of *O. aestivus* described by Plummer (*op. cit.*) are analogous to our observations of *O. vernalis*. To the best of our knowledge this report represents the first record of an arboreal nest site for *O. vernalis*.

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PTYAS NIGROMARGINATA (Green Ratsnake). **DIET.** Despite the wide geographic range of *Ptyas nigromarginata* and its attention in systematics research (Vogel and Hauser 2013. Asian Herpetol. Res. 4:166–181), very little was known about its natural history. The known diet of *P. nigromarginata* includes only rodents and anurans (Zhao et al. 1998. Fauna Sinica Reptilia Squamata Serpentes. Science Press, Beijing. 522 pp.).

At 1339 h on 3 July 2013, an adult *P. nigromarginata* was observed and photographed swallowing an adult female *Japalura yunnanensis* (Yunnan Mountain Lizard) along a country road near Zhiziluo Village of Fugong County, Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, western Yunnan Province, PR China (Fig. 1). The snake fled with the prey in its mouth shortly after the image was taken. This record adds lizards to the natural diet of *P. nigromarginata*.

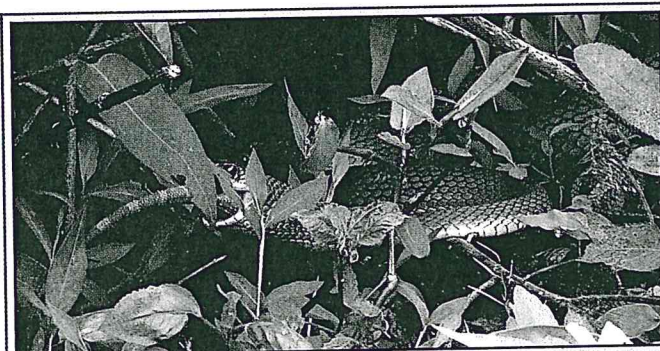


FIG. 1. Adult *Ptyas nigromarginata* swallowing an adult female *Japalura yunnanensis* in Fugong County, western Yunnan, PR China.

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SISTRURUS CATENATUS (Massasauga). **DIET.** On 20 June 2014 we found a road-killed sub-adult (mass = 22.7 g) female *Sistrurus catenatus* on a sandy access road in Kalkaska Co, Grayling, Michigan, USA. During necropsy, a damselfly (suborder Zygoptera) nymph was discovered in the snake's stomach (T. Cooley, pers. comm.). Given the range of taxa reported as *S. catenatus* prey items, it is apparent that this species is a fairly indiscriminate predator (Ernst and Ernst 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Books, Washington, DC. 668 pp.). To our knowledge, this is the first instance any damselfly species has been recorded as part of the diet for *S. catenatus*. The damselfly was the only item in the snake's gut, so it is not likely the result of secondary ingestion. As damselfly nymphs are fully aquatic,