



The native Florida Green Watersnake, *Nerodia floridana* (Goff 1936), preying upon the nonindigenous African Jewelfish, *Hemichromis letourneuxi* Sauvage 1880, in Florida

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The Florida Green Watersnake, *Nerodia floridana* (Goff 1936), is native to the southeastern United States from South Carolina to Florida (Conant and Collins 1998). In Florida, *N. floridana* (Fig. 1) has been documented throughout much of the state, including nearly all peninsular coun-



Fig. 1. The Florida Green Watersnake (*Nerodia floridana*) is known to consume invertebrates, fishes, frogs, salamanders, turtles, and even an alligator. Photograph by John Jensen.

ties (Krysko et al. 2011). *Nerodia floridana* has been reported consuming invertebrates, fishes, frogs, salamanders, and turtles, without reference to specific species (Van Hyning 1932, Allen 1939, Jensen et al. 2008), Congo Eels, more commonly known as Two-toed Amphiumas (= *Amphiuma means*; Allen and Neill 1952), and the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*; Allen 1969). Additionally, Bancroft et al. (1983) reported that eight *N. floridana* from Lake Conway, Orange County, Florida, contained fish remains (principally centrarchids and poeciliids), one consumed a Greater Siren (*Siren lacertina*), and one contained the tail of an artificial purple fishing worm. Herein, we document *N. floridana* preying on the nonindigenous African Jewelfish, *Hemichromis letourneuxi* Sauvage 1880, in Florida.

On 16 January 1992, one of us (SJW) was electroshocking nonindigenous fishes and incidentally collected a neonate (213.1 mm SVL, 282.6 mm TL) female *Nerodia floridana* in a canal on the northeastern corner of US 41 and SR 826, Miami, Miami-Dade County, Florida (25.76317°N, -80.31965°W, WGS84; elev. 1 m). This snake had obviously consumed a meal recently, and upon dissection it contained a nonindigenous *Hemichromis letourneuxi* (73 mm TL) in its stomach. The fish had been consumed head first. Both specimens were deposited in the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida collections (Fig. 2; *N. floridana* = Herpetology UF 168052; *H. letourneuxi* = Ichthyology UF 184182). This is the first known record of this native snake preying on a nonindigenous fish in Florida. *Hemichromis letourneuxi* (Fig. 3) is native to and widely distributed in central and western Africa and obtains a maximum standard length of about 12 cm (Loiselle 1979). It was first reported as introduced to southern Florida



Fig. 2. Neonate Florida Green Watersnake (*Nerodia floridana*; UF 168052) with consumed nonindigenous African Jewelfish (*Hemichromis letourneuxi*; UF 184182) collected on 16 January 1992 in Miami, Miami-Dade County, Florida. Photograph by Kenneth L. Krysko.

in 1965 (Rivas 1965) and is now widespread and abundant in canals, drainage ditches, streams, and wetlands throughout a large portion of southern Florida, including the Everglades (Fuller et al. 1999, Page and Burr 2011).

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Fig. 3. An African Jewelfish (*Hemichromis letourneuxi*). Photograph by Noel M. Burkhead.

Hemichromis letourneuxi; J. Steven Godley for literature references; and Robert Powell and an anonymous reviewer for helpful comments on this paper.

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