



Predation on a Cuban Brown Anole, *Anolis sagrei* (Dactyloidae), by a Spider, *Cupiennius cubae* (Ctenidae), in the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden, South-central Cuba

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Arthropods, including arachnids (scorpions, spiders, sun spiders, whip spiders, whip scorpions), insects (water bugs, ants, beetles, dragonfly, caddisfly and stonefly nymphs), crustaceans (crabs, shrimps), and centipedes (*Scolopendra* spp.), are known predators of small vertebrates (e.g., McCormick and Polis 1982, Menin et al. 2005, Toledo 2005, Henderson and Powell 2009), but spiders are by far the most frequently reported vertebrate predators of anurans and lizards. Wandering Spiders (Ctenidae) are known to prey on amphibians and reptiles in the Neotropics (e.g., Menin et al. 2005, Barbo et al. 2009, Barej et al. 2009, Losos 2009). However, West Indian records are scarce. *Ctenus ottleyi* (= *Oligoctenus ottleyi*; Platnick 2009) from Puerto Rico preys on *Eleutherodactylus coqui* (Falls and Woolbright in Formanowicz et al. 1981, Joglar 2005) and *Anolis gundlachi* (Clark and Gillingham 1990); and *Ohvida vernalis* (= *Ctenus vernalis*; Platnick 2009) from Cuba was observed preying on *E. zugi* (Novo et al. 1985).

Although the Cuban Brown Anole (*Anolis sagrei* Cocteau in Duméril and Bibron 1837) is one of the most widely distributed West Indian lizards, it is native to the Bahamas, the Cuban Archipelago, and Little Cayman (Henderson and Powell 2009). A great variety of vertebrates are known predators of this anole in nature, including frogs (*Osteopilus*), snakes (*Caraiba*, *Cubophis*, *Tropidophis*), lizards (*Anolis*, *Leiocephalus*), and birds (*Dives*, *Falco*, *Ferminia*, *Quiscalus*, *Mimus*) (for a review see Henderson and Powell 2009, Losos 2009). However, only one report of an arthropod preying on this lizard involved an Orbweaver, *Argiope trifasciata* (Armas 2001). Herein we report predation on *Anolis sagrei* by *Cupiennius* cf. *cubae* Strand 1909, in south-central Cuba. To the best of our knowledge this constitutes the first record of a ctenid spider preying on lizards in the Cuban Archipelago, and only the second case reported in the West Indies.

On 25 January 2014, at 2250 h, an adult female *Cupiennius* cf. *cubae* (8.6 mm carapace length, 0.94 g) was found devouring an immature male *A. sagrei* (31 mm SVL, 0.72 g) (Fig. 1). Both animals were on a bromeliad (*Tillandsia valenzuelana*) 210 cm above ground level in a tree at the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden (22°07'31.5"N, -80°19'20.2"W; 50 m a.s.l.), Cienfuegos Province; air tem-



Fig. 1. Predation on *Anolis sagrei* by *Cupiennius* cf. *cubae* in the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden, Cuba. Scale bars = 5 mm.

perature 21 °C. At the time of the observation, soft tissues of the lizard's head and anterior body were partially digested. The spider was hanging in an inverted position from the leaf of a bromeliad, holding the lizard with the first pair of legs and the chelicera. Another four individuals of *A. sagrei* were sleeping in the same bromeliad and adjacent twigs. After collection, the spider persisted in holding the prey despite considerable disturbance.

The spider was tentatively referred to *Cupiennius cubae* because this is the only species of this genus known to occur in Cuba. Both spider and lizard were deposited in the herpetological collection of the Museo de Historia Natural "Felipe Poey," Faculty of Biology, University of Havana (MFP 12516).

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