



Predation on a Slender Anole (*Anolis fuscoauratus*) by a Whip Scorpion (Order Amblypygi)

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The Slender Anole (*Anolis fuscoauratus* D'Orbigny 1837) is an arboreal, diurnally active species of lizard that attains a snout-to-vent length of about 50 mm (Carvajal-Campos and Ayala-Varela 2019). This species is distributed east of the Andes throughout northern South America (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and the Guyanas). In the Ecuadorean Amazon, it is most frequently encountered in the understory of primary rainforests, although it also exploits more disturbed areas, basking or displaying in tree falls or patches of open forest or sleeping at the edges of trails on small branches and leaves 1–2 m above the ground (Vitt et al. 2003).

Amblypygids, or whip scorpions, are members of the class Arachnida, order Amblypygi. They are generally nocturnal and considered to be sit-and-wait predators that take a variety of prey, rather than active foragers seeking specific targets. Amblypygids prey primarily on invertebrates (Chapin and Hebets 2016), but reports document predation on small vertebrates such as lizards, frogs, and even birds (Weygoldt 2000; Owen and Cokendolpher 2006; Chapin and Hebets 2016).

On 27 July 2019 I was conducting a night-time visual encounter survey with student volunteers on the “Mystery Trail” located in the camping area of the Sani Reserve, Sucumbios, Ecuador. At 2046 h, we encountered an amblypygid (*Heterophrynus* sp.) low on the trunk of a small tree next to the trail (-0.440251°, -76.310325°) with a captured adult male *A. fuscoauratus* in its pedipalps (Fig. 1). The arachnid appeared to have killed its prey by pushing its head back and using its fang-like chelicerae to bite into the throat of the anole. We found no other puncture marks on the anole. Based on the time of the encounter, the portion of



Fig. 1. An amblypygid (*Heterophrynus* sp.) eating a Slender Anole (*Anolis fuscoauratus*) on 27 July 2019 in the Sani Reserve, Sucumbios, Ecuador. Photograph by the author.

the lizard that had been consumed, and the fact that these lizards tend to search for sleeping locations in the early evening (pers. obs.), the amblypygid probably encountered and captured the anole while it was asleep. Although records exist of predation on lizards by whip scorpions, this observation definitively adds amblypygids to the list of known predators of *A. fuscoauratus*.

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