



# Predation of Cuban Brown Anoles, *Anolis sagrei* (Squamata: Dactyloidae), by House Sparrows, *Passer domesticus* (Aves: Passeriformes), and an Annotated List of Lizards Preyed upon by House Sparrows

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The House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* (Linnaeus 1758), is an opportunistic generalist that is mainly granivorous, but also consumes insects, human waste, and small vertebrates (Alonso 1985; Lowther and Cink 1992; Anderson 2006; Murgui 2011; Guerra Solana and Armas 2017; Howell and Clements 2019). This species was introduced to Cuba in the 19th Century (Garrido and García 1975) and now is the most common urban bird in the country (Garrido and Kirkconnell 2010).

At 1210 h on 14 June 2021, on the terrace of an urban residence in San Antonio de los Baños, Artemisa Province, Cuba (22.89347°N, 82.50978°W; 75 m asl), I observed a House Sparrow catching a juvenile Cuban Brown Anole (*Anolis sagrei*) (SVL ~20 mm) that was on the ground with-

out a readily accessible escape route (Fig. 1). The bird seized the lizard in its bill and flew to a nearby tree where it was consumed. At 0905 h four days later, in the same location, I observed another House Sparrow catch a small Cuban Brown Anole. As in the first observation, the bird flew to a nearby tree to swallow the lizard.

At 0950 h on 21 July 2021, on an unpaved street bordered by scrubby grass (Fig. 1) 100 m east of the above location, I observed a House Sparrow catch a subadult Cuban Brown Anole (SVL ~30 mm) and immediately fly to the roof of the nearest house, where it consumed the lizard. A few minutes later, the same bird approached within 30 cm of an adult male Cuban Brown Anole that was perched on a small stump. The lizard assumed a defensive posture and



**Fig. 1.** Urban locations in San Antonio de los Baños, Artemisa Province, Cuba, where House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) preyed on three Cuban Brown Anoles (*Anolis sagrei*) in a backyard (left) and along an unpaved street (right). The red ovals indicate where predation occurred. Photographs by the author.



**Fig. 2.** Adult male Cuban Brown Anoles (*Anolis sagrei*) (arrows) responding to attempted predation by a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) (lower left) in an urban area of San Antonio de los Baños, Artemisa Province, Cuba. Photograph by the author.

repeatedly displayed his dewlap without abandoning his position. Another adult male that was perched on a nearby wall also displayed his dewlap (Fig. 2). The bird desisted from an apparent predation attempt and abandoned the site.

In both successful predation events, the lizards were small (SVL  $\leq$ 30 mm) and both were cornered without an available escape route. In such scenarios, House Sparrows are not averse to preying on lizards (Table 1) and might be an important ecological factor affecting populations of urban lizards (Bello 2000).

**Table 1.** Lizards as prey of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). All were in urban settings except that reported by Ayres (2021), but even that event occurred near a human dwelling. Not included are instances of predation on Common Wall Lizards (*Podarcis muralis*) by Italian Sparrows (*Passer italiae*) (Gallelli 1948; Moltoni 1954, 1962; Giustetti 1980; Truffi 1985, Mostini 1988) and on Maltese Wall Lizards (*Podarcis filfolensis*) by Spanish Sparrows (*Passer hispaniolensis*) (Fornasari and Zava 2001).

Prey	Notes	References
Cuban Green Anole ( <i>Anolis porcatius</i> )	Adult male; San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba	Guerra Solana and Armas (2017)
Cuban Brown Anole ( <i>Anolis sagrei</i> )	Adults and juveniles; five instances in two localities in Miami, Florida, USA	Howell and Clements (2019)
Cuban Brown Anole ( <i>Anolis sagrei</i> )	Juveniles; three instances in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba	This paper
Unknown anole ( <i>Anolis</i> sp. [ <i>porcatius</i> ?])	Juvenile; La Lisa, La Habana, Cuba	Bello (2000)
White-throated Clawed Gecko ( <i>Gonatodes albogularis</i> )	La Lisa, La Habana, Cuba	Bello (2000)
Mediterranean Gecko ( <i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i> )	Juvenile (~5 cm); Chora, Astipalaia Island, Greece	Angelici (1993)
Bocage's Wall Lizard ( <i>Podarcis bocagei</i> )	Dunes of Baluarte, Vigo (Pontevedra), Spain	Ayres (2021)

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