



Second Report of Cannibalism in the Terciopelo, *Bothrops asper* (Squamata: Viperidae) from Costa Rica

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The genus *Bothrops* has 45 currently recognized species, with the majority distributed in South America; only the range of the Terciopelo (*Bothrops asper*) extends from Mexico to the lowlands in Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. *Bothrops asper*, a large, terrestrial viper (total length to 2.3 m, usually 1.65–1.80 m), is very abundant in the rainforests of both the Atlantic and Pacific slopes of Costa Rica (Solórzano 2022).

The Terciopelo appears to be an opportunistic predator, with a diet that includes small mammals (rodents and marsupials), small birds, lizards and snakes, frogs and caecilians, and some invertebrates (Mata-Lorenzen and Solórzano 2021; Toszeghi et al. 2022). To date, snakes known to be taken by Terciopelos include *Enuliophis sclateri*, *Porthidium lansbergii*, *Erythrolamprus bizona*, *Ninia sebae*, *Ninia atrata*, *Oxyrhopus petolarius*, *Tantilla supracincta*, *Dipsas andina*, and *Bothrops asper* (Buttenhoff and Vogt 1995; Fujishima et al. 2021; Gabrysova et al. 2020; Mendoza and Lucero 2009; Sasa et al. 2009; Solórzano 2022).

At 0947 h on 13 December 2022, CGQ was contacted by cilantro plantation workers about a recently killed Terciopelo (Fig. 1) in Bajos del Tigre, Siquirres, Limón Province, Costa Rica (10.005667 N, -83.544306 W; elev. 351 m asl). Noting that the snake had a large bulge in its body, the workers made a small incision and discovered that the prey was another large snake that had been swallowed headfirst. When they pulled the prey out, they determined it was another adult Terciopelo.

The predator (1.27 m) was only slightly larger than its prey (1.14 m); both were males. To the best of our knowledge this is the second instance of cannibalism recorded for *Bothrops asper* in Costa Rica, but the earlier report involved two juveniles (Buttenhoff and Vogt 1995).

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Figure 1. A recently killed Terciopelo (*Bothrops asper*) with the tail of its prey pulled out of the carcass by local workers (top); predator (above) and prey side-by-side (center); both snakes were adult males (bottom). Photographs by Carlos González Quesada.

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