



First Record of Predation on South American Wormlizards (*Ophiodes* sp.) by Duméril’s False Coralsnake (*Oxyrhopus clathratus*)

Ana Paula Gomes Dias, Kaíque Ferreira de Macedo, Clodoaldo Lopes de Assis, Eduarda Melo de Abreu Vieira, and Renato Neves Feio

Museu de Zoologia João Moojen, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Viçosa, Minas Gerais, Brazil anagdias98@gmail.com

Lizards are important components in the diets of snakes in the genus *Oxyrhopus*, representing almost 38% of prey items of some species (Alencar 2010). Duméril’s False Coralsnake, *Oxyrhopus clathratus* Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril 1854, occurs in eastern South America (Bernardo et al. 2012) and feeds on lizards and small mammals (Marques and Sazima 2004). South American worm lizards, *Ophiodes* Wagler 1828 (Anguillidae), range from northeastern to southern Brazil and also occur in Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina (Oliveira et al. 2021). Understanding feeding habits of snakes as well as other aspects of natural history are crucial factors in aiding their conservation (Leite et al. 2009). Herein we provide a new record of *O. clathratus* preying on *Ophiodes* sp. and a review of previously recorded prey of *O. clathratus*.

We collected a juvenile *Oxyrhopus clathratus* (SVL 250 mm) (Fig. 1A) in March 2021 in the Municipality of Ervália, State of Minas Gerais, southeastern Brazil (-20.85277 S, -42.51789 W). This site is in the Serra do Brigadeiro within the Atlantic Forest biome in the northern Serra da Mantiqueira Range. The snake was collected and the speci-

men was deposited in the herpetological collection of the Museu de Zoologia João Moojen, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Minas Gerais – Brazil (MZUFV 2778).

While dissecting the digestive tract of the snake, we found three recently digested lizard tails (Fig.1B), which we identified as belonging to the genus *Ophiodes* based on morphological characteristics such as a conical and pointed tail (Cinquième 1839), cycloid scales, and a greenish dorsal region with dark stripes (Boulenger 1885). Even though *Ophiodes striatus* occurs where we collected the *O. clathratus*, we prefer to identify our specimen only to genus, since this taxon might represent a species complex (Moura et al. 2012).

To complement our record, we conducted a literature search of previously recorded prey of *O. clathratus* by searching the Google Scholar database using the keywords “predation on *Ophiodes*,” “*Ophiodes*,” and “*Oxyrhopus clathratus* diet,” and reviewing the journals *Herpetological Review*, *Herpetology Notes*, and *Herpetologia Brasileira*. Our bibliographic review returned five records of predation events by *O. clathratus* with six different species being registered as prey (Table 1). No previous report mentioned any anguillid



Figure 1. Juvenile Duméril’s False Coralsnake (*Oxyrhopus clathratus*) (MZUFV2778) collected in the Municipality of Ervália, Minas Gerais, Brazil (A), and tails of *Ophiodes* sp. found in the snake’s stomach (B). Photographs by Clodoaldo L. de Assis.

Table 1. List of taxa taken by Duméril's False Coralsnakes (*Oxyrhopus clathratus*) in Brazil.

| Prey | Location (Municipality, State) | Reference |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Anguidae | | |
| <i>Ophiodes</i> sp. | Ervália, Minas Gerais | This study |
| Gekkonidae | | |
| <i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i> | —, Paraná | Morato 2005 |
| Gymnophthalmidae | | |
| <i>Ecleopopus gaudichaudii</i> | Peruíbe, São Paulo | Marques and Sazima 2004 |
| <i>Colobodactylus dalcyanus</i> | Piquete, São Paulo | Bernardo et al. 2011 |
| <i>Placosoma cordyline</i> | Teresópolis, Rio de Janeiro | Dill Orrico and da Costa 2009 |
| Didelphidae | | |
| <i>Monodelphis americana</i> | Sete Barras, São Paulo | Fiorillo et al. 2020 |
| Muridae | | |
| Muridae | Peruíbe, São Paulo | Marques and Sazima 2004 |

lizards, thus our work is the first record of *O. clathratus* preying on any species of *Ophiodes*. Other species of *Oxyrhopus* (*O. petolaris*, *O. rhombifer*, and *O. guibeii*) are known to prey on *Ophiodes* (Maschio and Di-Bernardo 2003; Barbo 2008; Dubeux et al. 2020), indicating that these lizards are taken by snakes in this genus. Also, the fact that we have found only tails in our snake is suggestive of the effectiveness of autotomy as a defensive mechanism in predator-prey interactions, and lizards of the genus *Ophiodes* are known to lose their tails extremely easily (Carreira et al. 2005).

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