



Predation on a Brazilian Teal, *Amazonetta brasiliensis* (Gmelin 1789), and a White-faced Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna viduata* (Linnaeus 1766), by a Green Anaconda, *Eunectes murinus* (Linnaeus 1758)

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Identifying prey items consumed by snakes provides valuable information about interspecific interactions, foraging strategies, and influence on prey population dynamics (Greene 1997). Moreover, as obligate predators, dietary resource use by snakes is affected by prey availability (Perkins and Eason 2024). Understanding snake feeding ecology, particularly for large constrictors, also is important for identifying potential human-snake conflicts (Headland and Greene 2011; Miranda et al. 2016) and for developing effective conservation strategies. However, the feeding ecology of many snakes, particularly in the Neotropics, remains poorly understood (Guedes et al. 2018).

The Green Anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*), which inhabits aquatic ecosystems throughout much of equatorial South

America, is a large constrictor that exhibits extreme sexual size dimorphism with females growing to more than 5 m in length (Rivas 2015). Green Anacondas feed on mammals, birds, and reptiles (Martins and Oliveira 1998; Rivas 2015; Thomas and Allain 2021; Camera and Meneses 2022). As apex predators, they exert top-down pressure on prey populations, increase the energy flow in trophic cascades, and transport nutrients from land to water (Miranda 2017). We herein report new prey items taken by *E. murinus*.

While examining anacondas at the “Coleção de Herpetologia” of the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil, we encountered a male *E. murinus* (UFMT-R 12094; SVL = 194.5 cm; tail length = 32.5 cm; Fig. 1A) with feathers of a Brazilian Teal (*Amazonetta*

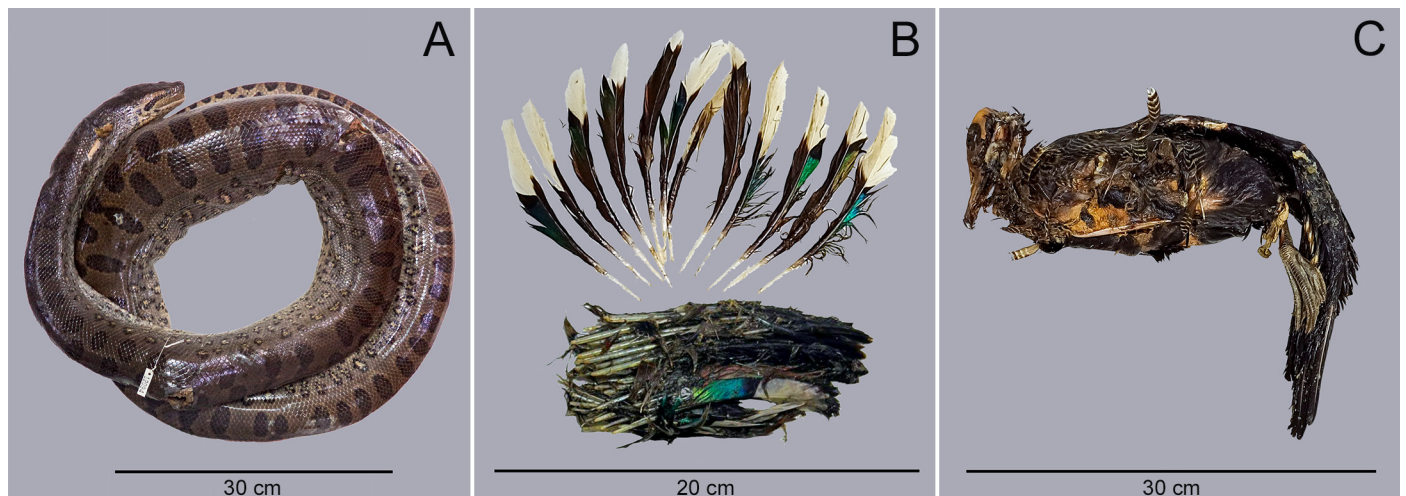


Figure 1. New prey records for the Green Anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*): Male specimen (UFMT-R12094) with prey in its gut (A); feathers of a Brazilian Teal (*Amazonetta brasiliensis*) (B); partially digested White-faced Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*). Photographs by Bruno F. Camera.

brasiliensis) (Fig. 1B) and a partially digested White-faced Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*) (Fig. 1C) in its gut. The anaconda was collected in January 2014 at the Siriema Ranch, Cuiabá Municipality, Mato Grosso, Brazil (-15.54261, -56.14896), situated in the upper Paraguay River Basin in the transitional zone between the northern Pantanal and southwestern Cerrado.

Both birds are in the Family Anatidae, which is comprised of ducks, geese, and swans (Winkler et al. 2020). *Amazonetta brasiliensis* ranges from Colombia and Venezuela south to southern Brazil (Clements et al. 2022) where it occupies habitats such as lakes, ponds, marshes, and slow-moving rivers (Sick 2001). *Dendrocygna viduata* ranges from Costa Rica to Brazil and also occurs in parts of Africa, Madagascar, and the Comoro Islands (Clements et al. 2022), occupying diverse aquatic habitats such as freshwater lakes, rivers, swamps, and brackish coastal areas (Sick 2001).

Dendrocygna sp. has been reported in the diet of *E. murinus* in the Llanos of Venezuela (Rivas 2015). Miranda et al. (2017) reported *A. brasiliensis*, *D. autumnalis*, and *D. bicolor* as prey items for the Yellow Anaconda (*E. notaeus*) in the La Estrella Marsh in Argentina. Those records plus our observations underscore the importance of anatid birds as prey of anacondas throughout their ranges.

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