



Predation on a Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) by a Bare-throated Tiger Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) in Costa Rica

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Lizards, the most diverse group of living non-avian reptiles (Meiri 2024; Uetz et al. 2025), are prey to many predators such as spiders, snakes, birds, and mammals. Many species in the genus *Basiliscus* (Corytophanidae) are known prey of various invertebrate and vertebrate predators (Reyes-Olivares et al. 2020; Rojas-Carranza et al. 2025). The Common

Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*), listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Acosta-Chaves et al. 2016), is a semi-aquatic lizard distributed from Costa Rica to Colombia and Venezuela (Uetz et al. 2025). The species' aquatic behavior includes running on the surface of water and diving into streams and rivers to escape predators and cap-



Figure 1. A Bare-throated Tiger Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) ingesting a Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) in Sierpe de Osa, Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Photographs by Raby Nuñez Escalante.

Table 1. Vertebrate prey of Bare-throated Tiger Herons (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*).

Species (Family)	Locality Reference
False Firemouth Cichlid <i>Cribroheros robertsoni</i> (Cichlidae)	Runaway Creek Nature Reserve, Belize Wynne and Cal (2025)
Gliding Leaf Frog <i>Agalychnis spurrelli</i> (Phyllomedusidae)	Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica Güell et al. (2019)
Savage’s Thin-toed Frog <i>Leptodactylus savagei</i> (Leptodactylidae)	Curú Wildlife Refuge, Paquera, Puntarenas, Costa Rica Acosta-Chaves et al. (2021)
Green Basilisk <i>Basiliscus plumifrons</i> (Corytophanidae)	El Invu de Peñas Blancas, Costa Rica Rojas-Carranza et al. (2025)
Green Ratsnake <i>Senticolis triaspis</i> (Colubridae)	Cabo Blanco Absolute Reserve, Cóbano, Puntarenas, Costa Rica Acosta-Chaves et al. (2021)
Yellow-bellied Seasnake <i>Hydrophis platurus</i> (Elapidae)	Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica Escalante and Benavides (2021)

ture invertebrate and small vertebrate prey (Acosta-Chaves et al. 2016; Barrio-Amorós 2020; Paniagua and Mora 2023; Matute et al. 2024).

Many species of birds are important predators of reptiles (Winkel and Ji 2012). Bare-throated Tiger Herons (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) are widely distributed in lowland regions from northern Mexico to northern Colombia, where they inhabit a wide range of habitats such as beaches, coastal freshwater streams, intertidal zones, lagoons, mangroves, marshes, riparian forests, rivers, roadside swales, swamps, and wet meadows (BirdLife International 2018), and feed on a diverse range of prey that includes crustaceans, fish, frogs, and reptiles (Baker et al. 1999; Güell et al. 2019; Escalante and Benavides 2021; Wynne and Cal 2025).

At 0800 h on 14 February 2025, during a herpetofaunal survey in Sierpe de Osa, Puntarenas, Costa Rica (8.86744, -83.47303), we observed an adult *T. mexicanum* standing in tall grass near the bank of a narrow stretch of river, where tall, dense grasses grow along the water’s edge adjacent to private property with a small house. As we approached, the heron suddenly thrust its beak into the vegetation, impaling a juvenile *B. basiliscus* (total length ~12 cm) through the head. The heron maintained a firm grip on the lizard, adjusted its hold, and then began swallowing it head-first (Fig. 1). The entire process, from the initial strike to complete ingestion, lasted ~ 4 min. Although a number of prey items are known to be taken by *T. mexicanum* (Table 1), to the best of our knowledge, this is the first report of a Bare-throated Tiger Heron preying on *B. basiliscus*.

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