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An unusual case of scavenging behavior in *Rhinella schneideri* in the upper Paraná River basin, Brazil

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Resumen: El día 25 de noviembre de 2010 encontramos un ejemplar adulto de *Ophiodes* sp. muerto en la Base de Pesquisas Avançadas do Nupelia, municipio de Porto Rico, estado de Paraná, Brasil. Treinta minutos más tarde, encontramos un ejemplar adulto de *Rhinella schneideri* ingiriendo el ejemplar de *Ophiodes* sp. Creemos que los casos de depredación de *Ophiodes* sp. son raros y que el evento observado parece consecuencia de una estrategia oportunista de alimentación de *R. scheneideri.*

Diets of amphibians are mainly constituted by insects, but other invertebrates or even small vertebrates have been recorded as food items (Toft, 1980; Duellman & Trueb, 1994; Pough *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the majority of amphibians are considered generalists and opportunistic feeders (Caramaschi, 1981).

Rhinella schneideri (Werner, 1894) is a large toad included in the *Rhinella marina* group (Pramuk *et al.*, 2007), being widely distributed in South America (Pramuk, 2006). This species is commonly found in open, urban areas and has a wide distribution in South America, Brazil, from the Atlantic coast (Ceará to Rio Grande do Sul), eastern Amazon in Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Uruguay (*sensu* Frost, 2011), occurring also in Brazilian Savannah (Colli *et al.*, 2002).

The diet of *R. scheneideri* presents a wide variety of items, composed mainly of arthropods, such as insect larvae, beetles and ants (Strüssmann *et al.*, 1984; Lajmanovich, 1994; Vitt & Caldwell, 1994; Hirai & Matsui, 2002; Duré *et al.*, 2009; Batista *et al.*, 2011).

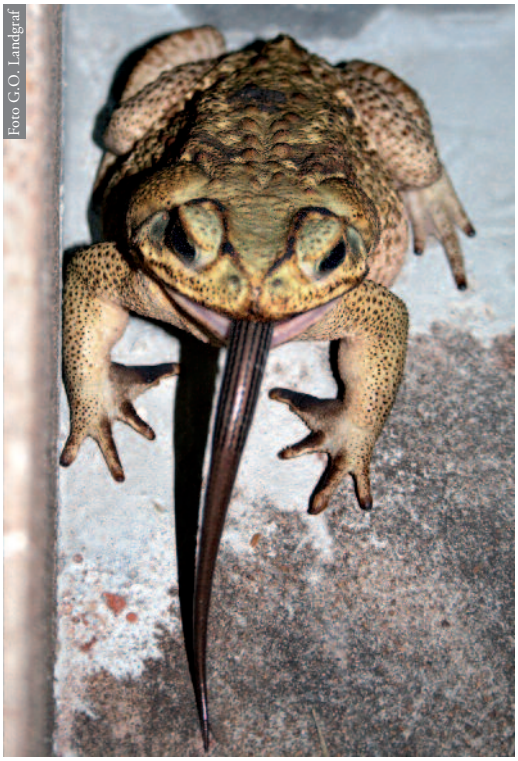

Figure 1. *R. schneideri* ingesting a dead individual of *Ophiodes* sp.
Figura 1. *R. schneideri* consumiendo un individuo muerto de *Ophiodes* sp.

Ophiodes Wagler, 1828 (Squamata: Anguidae) is a neotropical genus characterized by cryptozoic habits, a long cylindrical body, absence of front limbs, vestigial hind limbs, and capability of caudal autotomy. Then, these lizards are popularly known as "glass lizards" or "glass snakes" (Maginnis, 2006; Vitt & Caldwell, 2009). Genus *Ophiodes* is currently comprised of four species, among which *Ophiodes striatus* Spix, 1824 apparently represents a species complex that occurs in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and in southern to northeastern Brazil (Uetz, 2010).

According to Borges-Martins (1998), the name *Ophiodes fragilis* should apply to the individuals from northeastern Argentina and southern and south-eastern Brazil, and also from parts of the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso do Sul and Bahia. However, we prefer to refer individuals from these localities as *Ophiodes* sp. until a revision of the genus *Ophiodes* is effectively available (Anés & Borges-Martins, personal communication). Here we report the scavenging behavior of an adult "cururu toad", *R. schneideri* on "glass lizard", *Ophiodes* sp.

On 25th November 2010, around 00:34 am, an adult *R. schneideri* was observed ingesting an adult *Ophiodes* sp. in the Base de Pesquisas Avançadas do Núcleo de Pesquisas em Limnologia e Aquicultura (Nupélia) of the Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM), municipality of Porto Rico, state of Paraná, Brazil (UTM 7458657 S / -349742 W ; 243 masl).

The lizard was found dead under the grass, when we first saw it. After 30 minutes, we returned to the place and observed that the lizard was being consumed by an individual of *R. schneideri* (Figure 1). Apparently, as a result of feeling threatened by our presence, the toad escaped into a water pipe.

We believe that the lizard was killed by humans that live around the recorded occurrence point when foraging on the ground. Our record probably represents an ingestion, rather than a predation *per se*, because the lizard was already dead when we first saw the toad 'predating' the lizard.

Scavenging or carrion-eating is an eating habit known in many animal species (Curio, 1976) and most of the predators are scavenging, to a lesser or greater extent, consuming animals found dead (Sazima & Strussmann, 1990).

Previous records on scavenging behavior in bufonids are scarce and include those of Beane & Pusser (2005), which report scavenging of *Anaxyrus terrestris* on *Rana hecksheri*

and Tupper *et al.* (2009), on conspecific scavenging in *Anaxyrus fowleri*.

Our observation presents the first record of scavenging behavior in *R. schneideri*. In addition, this is the first record of a "glass lizard" in its diet.

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