

First record of the house gecko *Hemidactylus mabouia* (Moreau de Jonnès, 1818) in the diet of the vine snake *Oxybelis fulgidus* (Daudin, 1803)

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The vine snake *Oxybelis fulgidus* (Daudin, 1803) is a widely distributed arboreal member of the Colubridae which occurs from Mexico southwards to Bolivia and Brazil in the Amazon Forest (Cisneros-Heredia and Touzet, 2006). Recently, Scartozzoni, Salomão and Almeida-Santos (2009) presented data on the diet of *O. fulgidus*, based on original observations and a review of literature records. *Oxybelis fulgidus* was reported to feed exclusively on lizards (53.7%) and birds (46.3%). Regarding the lizards, 11 species were recorded as preys of this snake (two others were not identified on species level and a third individual was considered as an “unidentified lizard”) belonging to eight genera (*Ameiva*, *Anolis*, *Basiliscus*, *Ctenosaura*, *Mabuia*, *Polychrus*, *Tropidurus*, and *Sceloporus*) and seven families (Corytophanidae, Iguanidae, Phrynosomatidae, Polychrotidae, Scincidae, Teiidae, and Tropiduridae). In this study we present a new food item in the diet of *O. fulgidus*.

At the 19th of October 2010, during the afternoon, an individual of *O. fulgidus* was collected at the municipality of Belterra, Km 50 of the BR 163 road (02°45'10.12"S; 54°54'02.49"W), west of Pará, Brazil, and delivered to the authors. Due to an injury in the stomach region an individual of *Hemidactylus mabouia* (Moreau de Jonnès, 1818) was protruding from the abdominal cavity (Fig. 1). The collected *O. fulgidus* was an adult female with a snout-vent length of 500 mm,

tail length of 246 mm, head length of 24.81 mm, head width of 0.54 mm, and girth measure of the middle of its body of 7.76 mm. The prey was ingested tail first (Fig. 1B) and had a snout-vent length of 59 mm, girth measurement of the middle of the body of 11.03 mm and width between the legs (>width) of 23.78 mm (Fig. 1C). Both the specimens (predator and prey) are housed under the same voucher (LPHA 4941) in the herpetological collection of Laboratório de Pesquisas Zoológicas, Faculdades Integradas do Tapajós in the municipality of Santarém, state of Pará, Brazil.

This is the first time that a member of the Gekkonidae has been recorded in the diet of *O. fulgidus*. The gecko *H. mabouia* is an invasive species with a wide distribution in the tropics, which has most likely reached the Americas by means of lifting on slave ships coming from Africa during the 16th century (Avila-Pires, 1995; Rocha and Anjos, 2007). It is a nocturnal species strongly associated with human establishments. Few populations live in non-anthropogenic environments (Avila-Pires, 1995; Rocha and Anjos, 2007). The *O. fulgidus* specimen presented in the current study was collected near an agglomeration of houses, approximately 100 m away from a forested area (A.P. Santos, com. pers.). The occurrence of *O. fulgidus* in such a human-modified environment would allow the species to prey on *H. mabouia*.

Oxybelis fulgidus is a sit-and-wait predator with diurnal habits which feeds on diurnal prey, and may occasionally actively forage (Martins and Oliveira, 1998; Martins, Marques and Sazima, 2008; Scartozzoni, Salomão and Almeida-Santos, 2009). The record of *H. mabouia* as part of diet of *O. fulgidus* could be interpreted as additional evidence for active foraging, since *H. mabouia* is nocturnal and the snake was captured during the day. Due to the well-conserved state of the prey (Fig. 1C) it is not likely that predation occurred during the night before. During the day, *H. mabouia* shelters in places such as roofs, wall cracks and tree barks (APSI, obs. pers.), and may be susceptible to predation by an actively foraging snake.

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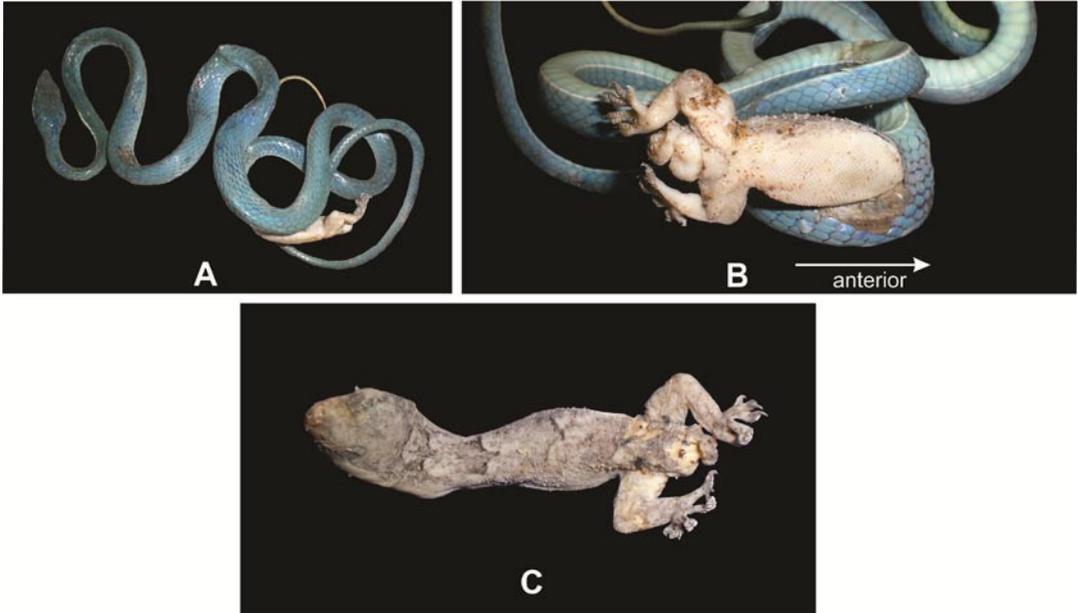


Figure 1. *Oxybelis fulgidus* specimen from the municipality of Belterra, state of Pará, Brazil, showing the ingested *Hemidactylus mabouia* specimen. (A) General dorsal view of the snake (LPHA 4941; female; snout-vent length 500 mm; tail length 246mm), (B) insert showing the direction of the prey ingestion and (C) dorsal view of prey (LPHA 4941; snout-vent length 59 mm).

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