

# Grass mice (*Akodon* sp.): an unrecorded prey for the dipsadid snake *Taeniophallus affinis*

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The dipsadid snake *Taeniophallus affinis* is endemic to the Brazilian Atlantic Forest (Di-Bernardo and Lema, 1988; Argôlo, 1998; Condez, Sawaya and Dixo, 2009; Paula, Zanella and Guaragni, 2011). Ecological data on this species is scarce, but published information on diet indicates that this snake feed upon anurans and lizards (Sazima, Chini and Souza, 1992; Souza and Cruz, 2000; Marques, Eterovic and Sazima, 2004; Palmuti, Cassimiro and Bertoluci, 2009; Zacariotti and Gomes, 2010). However, Barbo and Marques (2003) found an individual of *Amphisbaena mertensi* (Amphisbaenidae) in the gut of a specimen collected in nature; necrophagy is unlikely due to the absence of necrophagous insect larvae in this gut content. Here we report for the first time a mammal prey for this snake.

An adult female *T. affinis* (SVL = 550 mm, tail = 145 mm, weight = 50g) collected in the municipality of Rio Negro (Paraná state, Brazil) and housed in the collection of the Museu de História Natural Capão da Imbuia (MHNCI 11330), contained the remains of a mammal prey in its gut. Hairs found in the snake gut content were prepared according to Quadros and Monteiro-Filho (2006) and identified throughout cuticular and medullar patterns comparisons with reference collections and identification keys (Cavia et al., 2008; Martin, Gheler-Costa and Verdade, 2009). Based on the lanceolate shape of cuticular scales in the proximal portion and the biseriata medulla, the hairs were identified as being from a small rodent of the genus *Akodon* (Cricetidae, Sigmodontinae).

Three species of *Akodon* occur in the area of Rio Negro: *A. montensis* (adult mean CC = 107 mm, weight = 47 g), *A. paranaensis* (adult mean CC = 109 mm, weight = 32 g), and *A. serrensis* (adult mean CC = 97 mm, weight = 26 g) (see Bonvicino, Oliveira and D'Andrea, 2008). Small mammals may be an unusual prey to species in the genus *Taeniophallus* because these snakes have small and slender bodies. However, juveniles of *Akodon* weigh around 10 g (KGF, pers. obs.). Thus prey/predator mass ratio for this snake may attain about 0.2, probably the maximum limit for this snake based on information for related species (CAG, pers. obs.).

*Taeniophallus affinis* seems to forage actively through leaf litter (Di-Bernardo, 1992), searching mainly for frogs and lizards. However, this snake eventually finds in this place other vertebrates as small mammals or amphisbaenids which are not discarded, but rather eaten.

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