

# Predation on *Dendropsophus elianeae* (Napoli & Caramaschi, 2000) (Anura: Hylidae) by *Thamnodynastes hypoconia* (Cope, 1860) (Squamata: Colubridae)

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Predation is one of the most important pressures affecting the structure of frogs community (Duellman and Trueb, 1986). Amphibians are considered high-quality prey for many predators, including snakes, because they have a high rate of protein and do not have indigestible tissues such as hair, feathers, or chitin (Wells, 2007). Although difficult to observe, predations by snakes on frogs are reported frequently (Pombal Jr., 2007; Salles and Smith, 2011; Winkler et al., 2011).

*Thamnodynastes hypoconia* is a small-sized opisthoglyph species with nocturnal habit and its diet is constituted mainly of lizards and anurans (Marques, Eterovic and Sazima, 2001). This snake is frequently found associated with wet grassland physiognomies (Sawaya, Marques and Martins, 2008) and is widely distributed in South America (Franco and Ferreira, 2002).

On November 13th 2011, at 19:33 pm, air temperature 19.5°C, a female *T. hypoconia* (SVL= 228mm; mass= 4.7 g) was observed preying upon one individual of *Dendropsophus elianeae* (SVL = 24.54 mm) (Fig. 1). These animals were found in an edge of a pond at the Estação Ecológica de Santa Barbara (22°48'48.85"S, 49°14'10.16"O; 500 m a.s.l.), a protected area of Cerrado in the central region of the São Paulo state, Southeastern Brazil.

The snake was observed at about 50 cm above the water, perched on a grass and was observed swallowing the treefrog from the anterior portion. The snake was collected and placed in a transparent plastic bag.

After 12 minutes the snake regurgitated the prey (Fig. 2). Specimens were collected and deposited in the herpetological collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo state, Brazil (voucher number: IBSP-81.754 and IBSP.CRIB-0371).

There are records of *T. hypoconia* preying on a microhylid frog (*Chiasmocleis albopunctata*; Maffei, Rolim and Jim, 2011) and preying on some hylids (*Hypsiboas bichoffi*, *Scinax perereca* and *S. rizibilis*; Pombal Jr., 2007). Herein, we described the first record of predation on the genus *Dendropsophus* by *T. hypoconia*.

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**Figure 1.** *Thamnodynastes hypoconia* preying on an individual of *Dendropsophus elianeae* in the Brazilian Cerrado.

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**Figure 2.** *Dendropsophus elianae* regurgitated by *Thamnodynastes hypocoenia*.