

Predation on the lizard *Iguana iguana* (Sauria: Iguanidae) by the snake *Siphlophis compressus* (Serpentes: Dipsadidae), at Rondônia state, Brazil.

Antonio Mollo Neto^{1*}, Paola Maria Sánchez-Martínez² and Renato Augusto Junqueira Gaiga³

Siphlophis compressus (Daudin, 1803) is a snake species occurring from Costa Rica to southeastern South America (Marques, Eterovic and Sazima, 2001; Frota et al., 2005; Costa, São Pedro and Feio, 2010). *Siphlophis compressus* is a primarily nocturnal and arboreal Dipsadidae that inhabits humid forests and may be found in both primary and secondary landscapes, in bushes and also high up in trees (Martins and Oliveira, 1998; Barreto Guedes et al., 2011; Whitworth and Beirne, 2011). Despite its wide distribution, *S. compressus* may be locally threatened by deforestation (Embert et al., 2012). Even so, the species is considered as Least Concern at International Union for Conservation of Nature (Embert et al., 2012).

Snakes are often cited as lizard predators and there are some reported cases of lizards as prey of genus *Siphlophis* (e.g. Duellman, 1978; Riley and Winch, 1985; Prudente, Moura-Leite and Morato, 1998; Whitworth and Beirne, 2011; Barreto Guedes et al., 2011). The diet of *S. compressus* consists mainly of lizards, but occasionally snakes, mammals, anurans and lizard eggs (Martins and Oliveira, 1998; Barreto Guedes et al., 2011).

The species *Iguana iguana* (Linnaeus, 1758), is distributed throughout, from Mexico to Central Brazil (Vanzolini, Ramos-Costa and Vitt, 1980; Avila-Pires, 1995; Uetz, 2012). *Iguana iguana* is a diurnal and heliothermic lizard inhabiting mainly forest landscapes, often found basking in the vegetation (Vanzolini, Ramos-Costa and Vitt, 1980; Avila-Pires, 1995). Both

species (*S. compressus* and *I. iguana*) are usually found in sympatry, in riparian situations.

During a field trip in Porto Velho, Rondônia on May 2nd, 2012, in a monitoring campaign developed by field staff for the Jirau Hydroelectric powerplant installation, an adult *Siphlophis compressus* (measuring 851 mm snout-vent length, 259 mm tail length, 22.68 mm head length) was found constricting a juvenile *Iguana iguana* (measuring 121 mm snout-vent length, 305 mm tail length, 25.93 mm head length). The individuals were

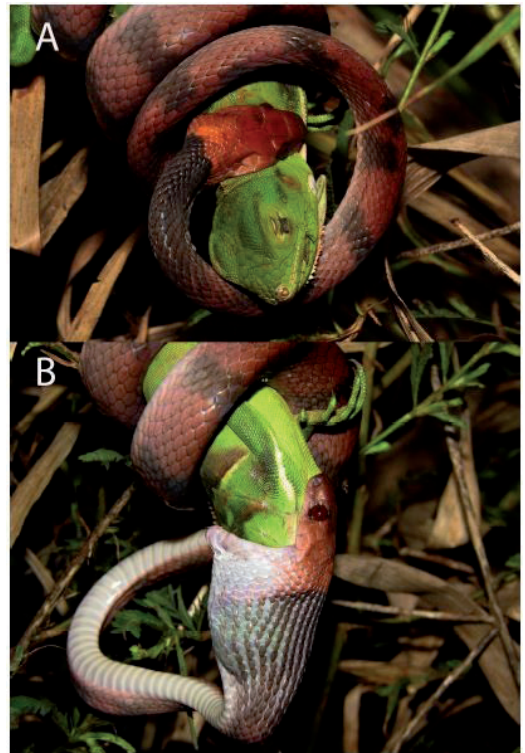


Figure 1. A. An adult *Siphlophis compressus* (Daudin, 1803) constricting a juvenile *Iguana iguana* (Linnaeus, 1758) at 01:01 am; B. *S. compressus* (Daudin, 1803) swallowing an *I. iguana* (Linnaeus, 1758) at 01:11 am.

1 Universidade Federal do ABC, Centro de Ciências Naturais e Humanas, Laboratório de Vertebrados. Av. dos Estados 5001, Bloco A, 626-3. CEP 09210-971. Santo André, SP, Brazil.

2 Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, Laboratório de Herpetologia. Av. Nazaré 481, CEP 04263-000. São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

3 Biotropica Consultoria Ambiental LTDA, Av. Santo Antônio 571, CEP 37701-036. Poços de Caldas, MG, Brazil.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: mollonetoa@gmail.com

located around 01:00 am in a bush, approximately 1.80 meters above the ground at the edge of the water, right bank of Madeira river (09°34'18.9"S, 065°00'42.9"W).

When found, the individual of *S. compressus* was constricting the lizard (Figure 1 A) and we waited about 10 minutes for the snake starting to swallow its prey headfirst (Figure 1 B). Thereafter, both specimens were collected. At this moment the snake started to regurgitate the lizard. The specimens were euthanized with anesthetics, fixed in 10% formalin, conserved in 70% alcohol and housed in the herpetological collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP 20191 *S. compressus* and MZUSP 103405 *I. iguana*).

This first record of an *Iguana iguana* predated by a *Siphlophis compressus* corroborates information by Prudente, Moura-Leite and Morato (1998). They suggested that ingestion of diurnal lizard species happens at night while they are inactive. Our observation also demonstrates *S. compressus*'s capacity to swallow large prey.

Despite this new record and the others published by Martins and Oliveira (1998) and Barreto Guedes *et al.* (2011) about the diet of *Siphlophis compressus*, still there is no adequate information to make detailed assumptions concerning to ontogenetic shift neither some preferences for food.

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