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MASTIGODRYAS BODDAERTI (Boddaert's Tropical Racer): PREDATION. Frogs do not have nails, teeth and hair per se, and since they are able to rapidly convert ingested food into biomass, they often represent a high quality meal (Wells, 2007). Thus, many different animals are known to attack frogs, such as arthropods like arachnids, centipedes (McCormick & Polis, 1982; Forti *et al.*, 2007). Vertebrates such as snakes one of the more significant predators on adult amphibians (Toledo *et al.*, 2007).

This paper presents a predation behavior record

of the snake, *Mastigodryas boddaerti* on the frog, *Leptodactylus fuscus* in natural conditions, in Cuiabá municipality, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. This region has annual precipitation varying from 1,250 to 1,500 mm. Two different seasons (rainy/dry) are recognized, with mean air temperature about 24 - 26 °C Carvalho & Nogueira (1998).

Mastigodryas boddaerti occurs in Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Trinidad, French Guiana and Peru (Cunha & Nascimento 1993; Uetz, 2008). It is a terrestrial and diurnal species whose diet is composed mainly of lizards, frogs of the families Leptodactylidae and Hylidae (Vanzolini, 1986; Carvalho & Nogueira, 1998; Bernarde, 2004; Leite *et al.* 2007), reptile eggs, birds, and small mammals (Bernarde, 2004). On this occasion the victim was *Leptodactylus fuscus* (Leptodactylidae), which occurs throughout Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and the eastern Andes (Frost, 2007). Males of *L. fuscus* are approximately 36 mm and females 39 mm of Snout-vent length (SVL). Reproduction is restricted to the rainy season, when males build nests on the mud and actively vocalize to attract females (Martins, 1988).

The predation event was observed on the 29st February 2008, at 14:05 hrs (approximately 36.0 °C air temperature) by the first author, who documented the entire event photographically. The *L. fuscus* individual invaded the backyard area of a rural residence (approximately 15° 20' S 55° 53', 250 m elevation) in Cuiabá, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. The snake appeared, possibly attracted by the prey movement, a feature common to snakes with diurnal habits (Ota, 1986), and slowly, by lateral undulations approached the victim. The snake stopped to 20 cm from the frog and struck the left pelvic region of the victim rapidly, without releasing the frog. In response, the frog started to emit a 'release call', but the snake held it by the left posterior limb with the mouth. The ingestion process occurred from cloacae to head direction, after about 1 minute from the initial strike (Fig. 1). Two minutes from the ingestion process commencing, the snake consumed the entire captured prey.

The snake was then collected and deposited as a voucher specimen at Coleção Zoológica da Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, UFMT

6505 (SVL: 791 mm; TL: 298 mm; M: 85 g, female).

Three main kinds of attacks and subjugations have been described in snakes: standstill, constriction, and poisoning (Pinto & Lema, 2002). Generally, constriction is used by members of Boidae family and sometimes by Colubridae (Pinto & Lema, 2002). Viperidae, such as the Lancehead (*Bothrops jararaca*), subjugate prey by poisoning (Sazima, 1989); Sueiro & Brites, 2006). On this occasion *M. boddaerti* did not act by constriction during the attack, possibly due to the relative small size of the frog. However, it is possible that prey with claws, that are considered fast moving and able to promote injury (such as lizards), are

taken using constriction by *M. boddaerti* to immobilize and kill prey.

Further natural observations with different prey would be required to confirm this hypothesis. Other species of amphibians are known from the diet of *M. boddaerti* but to the best of our knowledge we believe this is the first detailed record of predation on *L. fuscus* in natural circumstances.

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Figure 1. *Mastigodryas boddaerti* preying on *Leptodactylus fuscus*.

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AMPHISBAENA ALBA (Worm Lizard): DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR. *Amphisbaena alba* (Linnaeus, 1758) occurs in forested lowlands of South America, from Panama through Venezuela, Trinidad, and the Guyana; Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia eastern the Andes; Brazil and northern Paraguay (Gans, 2005). It shows fossorial habits and diet that comprises varied arthropods and their larvae, and occasionally some vertebrates, such as small rodents and lizards (Colli & Zamboni, 1999).

This report describes for the first time the defensive behavior of an *A. alba* (approximately 400 mm total length) in nature under predatory circumstances.

The specimen was found in Santa Rosa Farm, district of Curvelo-MG (18°45'S 44°25'W), and observed in January 2008, at about 8:30 a.m. crossing a lawn. The worm lizard was noticed by some chickens and a rooster (*Gallus* sp.) which attacked it, pecking its body randomly (Fig. 1). The amphisbenid reacted to all lunges by opening the mouth, lifting the tail and trying to strike a bite, eventually forming a semicircle with the body seemingly trying to defend itself (Fig. 2 and 3). Some chickens got away after some time, however one chicken continued pecking the worm lizard in an apparent predatory attempt, and the amphisbenid tried to escape. Eventually it reached a tree stub hiding in a hole.

The pursuit lasted about 15 minutes when pictures were taken. No injuries were observed in the *Amphisbaena*. This behavior described as defensive (Gans, 1962) had been observed only when confrontations were provoked experimentally (Gans, 1962; Greene, 1973; Brito *et al.*, 2001). Caudal autotomy did not occur in *A. alba* (this case) on this occasion. This may have been because of the lack of an intravertebral caudal fracture plane and consequently absence of external caudal narrowing (Gans, 1962), a feature different from species such *A. mertensi* (Brito *et al.*, 2001) which used it as an important survival strategy like other amphisbenids (Vanzolini, 1948, 1951).