

Epicrates cenchria (Rainbow Boa): Feeding Observation

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The Boid genus *Epicrates* consist of fourteen species belonging to the family Boide, (Wallach, et al., 2014). However, just five species are recognised in the mainland, (Passos and Fernandez, 2008; Rivera, et al., 2011). The Rainbow Boa, *Epicrates cenchria* is a medium-sized boid distributed throughout the entire biogeographic region of the Amazonas, from Colombia, across Venezuela, Guyana, French Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru to Bolivia (Passos and Fernandez, 2008; Rivera, et al., 2011; Wallach, et al., 2014). It is an infrequently encountered terrestrial constrictor that may utilise bushes and low branches when hunting or resting (Savage, 2002). The observations for this species at the Cusco Amazonico show prey including frogs, bird's eggs, bats and rodents as part of their diet, (Duellman, 2005).

Sciurus spadiceus the southern Amazon Red or Black Squirrel, is a large-bodied tree squirrel with an elongated tail, distributed throughout southern Colombia and Venezuela, south through the lowland forest of Peru, Ecuador, western Brazil, and Bolivia, often extending into the foothills of the Andes, (Gwinn, et al., 2012).

On 23 July 2014, between 07:45 – 08:35hrs, we observed an adult *E. cenchria* (ca. 1300mm total length predated on a *S. spadiceus*, (Fig. 1), in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve at the PV2 (Puesto de Vigilancia 2), (04° 52' 26.0" S, 74° 21' 42.8" O, 103m above the sea level), located in the Loreto

Region on the Ucayama depression, at the confluence of the Marañon and Ucayali rivers, Peru.

Previous studies documented few prey items: Bernarde and Abe, (2010) studying the feeding habits of snakes in the Spike West in Rondônia, Brazil, registered just unidentified fragments of rodents; Palmuti, et al., (2009) reported the presence of spines of a porcupine in the stomach of one individual of this species, whilst Ramos-Donato, et al., (2012) reported predation of a bat (*Lonchorhina aurita*). Field observations of feeding in *E. cenchria* are limited, but future studies will hopefully increase our knowledge of the dietary habits in nature.

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Figure 1. Adult *E. cenchria* (ca. 1300 mm approximate SVL) predated on a *S. spadiceus* in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Peru. Photograph: D Bowman.



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