

Boa constrictor (Common Boa) feeds on and regurgitates alive a lizard *Iguana iguana* (Green Iguana)

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The Neotropical common boa (*Boa constrictor*) is a large boid snake that feeds on small and medium vertebrates (Martins & Oliveira 1998). Its diet consists primarily of mammals but may also feed on birds and small lizards (Martins & Oliveira, 1998; Duellman, 2005; Pizzato et al., 2009; Rocha & Bernarde, 2012).

During a herpetofauna monitoring at Porto Trombetas in central Amazonia, Pará state, Brazil, conducted in January, 2010, we captured an adult female of *B. constrictor* (1,97 m rostral-anal length; weight = 7,0 kg) at the edge of a forested area. The snake was found wrapped under a tree trunk at around 10:00 a.m., when the air temperature was near 32°C. Immediately after capture, the snake regurgitated an adult male green iguana (*Iguana iguana*) (0,35 m rostral-anal length; weight = 2,75 kg) which it appeared to have swallowed headfirst. The lizard's weight was about 39% of the mass of the *B. constrictor*, and possibly the predation event had occurred a few minutes earlier, given the apparent integrity of the iguana. On initial discovery we were not aware that the snake had recently fed, because there was no external evidence of prey in the stomach position. We do not rule out the possibility that the iguana was still in the esophagus region at the time, but the snake had fully swallowed the lizard.

The snake was subsequently submitted to veterinary treatment for dehydration, perhaps due to the regurgitation. We assumed the iguana was dead, since *B. constrictor* kills its preys by constriction before consumption. However, the iguana started to walk five minutes after regurgitated. We submitted the lizard to a veterinary evaluation and no injuries were detected. Both specimens were kept for observations and were released one week later at the same locality where they were found.

Reptiles are known to highly reduce their metabolism and certain some physiological processes under extreme conditions such as low temperatures or dehydration (Toledo et al., 2008). In the present case, the green iguana's cardiac rhythm had probably drastically reduced under the absence

of oxygen imposed by snake's constriction giving the appearance of being dead. Although large iguanid lizards might be occasional prey of *B. constrictor*, endothermic vertebrates organisms and/or small lizards are more common prey species. Therefore, the senses of a snake may be less adapted to the recognition of iguana's physiological condition. In theory this could represent a problem to the predator, since large lizards could impose injuries to the digestive system, due to movements after been swallowed. Further research is necessary to understand physiological aspects of predation on ectothermic organisms by boid snakes.

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