REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Predation by a Brown Rainbow Boa (*Epicrates maurus*) on a Khaki Ameiva (*Ameiva bifrontata*) in Colombia

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The Brown Rainbow Boa (*Epicrates maurus* Gray 1849), a non-venomous constrictor that can grow to 1.5 m SVL, is nocturnally active, terrestrial or semi-arboreal, and occurs in a variety of habitats, including dry forests, savannas, and open areas, even those with some level of anthropogenic disturbance (Pérez-Santos and Moreno 1988; Savage 2002; Wallach et al. 2014; Rojas-Murcia et al. 2016). This species is widely distributed at elevations to 1,200 m in central and northern South America (Savage 2002; Uetz et al. 2024).

Little is known about the prey of these snakes, with reports limited to a Neotropical Ameiva (*Ameiva ameiva*) (Starace 2013), a Greater Sac-winged Bat (*Saccopteryx bilineata*) (Aya-Cuero et al. 2019), a European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) (Salcedo-Rivera et al. 2021), and a Short-tailed Cane Mouse (*Zygodontomys brevicauda*) (Salazar-Guzmán et al. 2022). Also, filial cannibalism of dead hatchlings and undeveloped eggs was documented by Lourdais et al. (2005).

At 1520 h on 11 July 2024, we captured a juvenile female *E. maurus* (SVL 635 mm, TL 87 mm, mass 114 g) in a pile of wood and soil in tropical dry forest in the Upper Magdalena River Basin, Colombia, during rescue and deterrence activities for the "Puerta de Oro" solar project located in a rural area of the Municipality of Guaduas, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia (5.021667, -74.726889; elev. 227 m asl). After capture, we placed the boa in a bucket in which, five minutes later, it regurgitated an adult male Khaki Ameiva (*Ameiva bifrontata* Cope 1862) (SVL 125 mm, TL 272 mm, mass 57 g) (Fig. 1). The lizard, which was intact and showed no signs of digestion, had probably been ingested shortly before the snake was captured. The snake was released in the project's faunal receptor area; the lizard was preserved and deposited in the Museo de Herpetología de la Universidad de Antioquia (MHUA MHUA-R 16022).

The ingested lizard had half the mass of the boa. Size relationships between predator and prey in snakes are often highly disproportionate (e.g., Glaudas et al. 2018). In particular, for boids, the predator-prey size relationship shows that relative decrease in head length with increasing body size, allows smaller snakes to exploit relatively larger prey than adults (Pizzatto et al. 2009).

To the best of our knowledge, this is only the second report of any snake in the genus *Epicrates* preying on an ameiva. Ameivas (Family Teiidae) are diurnally active and very agile, whereas *E. maurus* is mainly nocturnal, with foraging and feeding occurring primarily during evening

Figure 1. A Brown Rainbow Boa (*Epicrates maurus*) and a Khaki Ameiva (*Ameiva bifrontata*) in the bucket where the snake's prey was regurgitated. Photograph by Freddy Alexander Grisales-Martínez.

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hours, while during the day it typically shelters under cover (Kissoon 2011). Consequently, most of the documented prey species are small mammals that exhibit crepuscular and/or nocturnal behavior (Aya-Cuero et al. 2019; Salcedo-Rivera et al. 2021; Salazar-Guzmán et al. 2022). However, at least some boids feed on both diurnal and nocturnal prey while employing a combination of active searching and sit-and-wait foraging strategies (Henderson and Pauers 2012; Rodríguez-Cabrera et al. 2020). Furthermore, as in this case and the one previous report of *E. maurus* consuming an ameiva (Starace 2013), juveniles of at least some boids tend to consume ectothermic prey, whereas adults are more likely to prey on endotherms (Pizzatto et al. 2009; Henderson and Pauers 2012; Henderson et al. 2021).

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