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## PREDATION ON *TAENIOPHALLUS AFFINIS* (GÜNTHER, 1858) BY *ERYTHROLAMPRUS AESCULAPII* (LINNAEUS, 1766) (SERPENTES: DIPSADIDAE)

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### ABSTRACT

The report describes the predation on *Taeniophallus affinis* by *Erythrolamprus aesculapii* and comments briefly the body size ratio between prey and predator.

**Keywords:** predation, snakes, *Taeniophallus affinis*, *Erythrolamprus aesculapii*, body size ratio.

### RESUMO

É relatada a predação de *Taeniophallus affinis* por *Erythrolamprus aesculapii* e brevemente comentado a proporção do tamanho do corpo entre presa e predador.

**Palavras-chave:** Predação, serpentes, *Taeniophallus affinis*, *Erythrolamprus aesculapii*, proporções corporais.

### CASE REPORT

*Taeniophallus affinis* is a terrestrial and oviparous snake endemic to the Southern Atlantic Forest (Di-Bernardo & Lema, 1988; Condez *et al.*, 2009). Aglyphous, *T. affinis* feeds on anurans and lizards (Zacariotti & Gomes, 2010), amphisbaenians (Barbo & Marques, 2003) and on small rodents (Gomes *et al.*, 2012).

*Erythrolamprus aesculapii*, the coral snake (false), is a terrestrial and oviparous species widely distributed all over the Neotropical region (Peters & Orejas-Miranda, 1970). Opistoglyphous, *E. aesculapii* feeds mainly on other snakes.

On May 2012 a juvenile *E. aesculapii* (male: SVL = 340.0mm, tail length = 55.0mm, head length =

12.5mm, mass = 14.2g) (Figure 1) collected in the municipality of Jucituba (state of São Paulo) regurgitated one specimen of *T. affinis* (SVL = 294.0mm, tail length = 10.0mm + x, head length = 11.6mm, mass = 8.7g) (Figure 2).

There is a morphological relation in this case. The prey/predator ratio is an ecological parameter that allows interesting inferences on the foraging ecology of species (Hampton, 2011). In this present context the prey to predator mass of the dipsadid species reported here is 0.61 and the total length of the prey to the snout-vent length of the predator is 0.89, considering 10.0 mm the tail length of the prey.

These findings may contribute to the discussion involving the relation prey/predator size, considered

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in the literature to be proportionally larger in juvenile snakes than in adults (Marques & Puerto, 1994; Ruffato *et al.*, 2003). The observed differences in the ratios can be interpreted by two points of view: i) prey choice of juvenile and adult snakes, ii) fortuitous encounters of prey and predator. We consider the second hypothesis more plausible.

To our knowledge, this is the first record of *E. aesculapii* preying on a species of the genus *Taeniophallus*. The snakes reported here were deposited together in the Herpetological Collection of the Instituto Butantan, IBSP 82.408.

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FIGURES



Figure 1. *Erythrolamprus aesculapii*: male, SVL = 340.0 mm, tail length = 55.0 mm, head length = 12.5 mm, mass = 14.2 g.



Figure 2. *Taeniophallus affinis*: SVL = 294.0 mm, tail length = 10.0 mm + n, head length = 11.6 mm, mass = 8.7 g.