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Notes on the diet of *Philodryas nattereri* (Squamata: Colubridae) in southeastern Brazil

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The brown racer, *Philodryas nattereri* STEINDACHNER, 1870, is widely distributed in arid and semiarid regions of Brazil and Paraguay (UETZ et al. 2011). Like with most of its congeners, its feeding habits can be classified as generalist and includes several small vertebrates such as lizards, birds, mammals and amphibians (VITT & VANGILDER 1983, FRANÇA et al. 2008, MESQUITA et al. 2011).

On 15 November 2011 at around 22:00 h, we observed an adult *Philodryas nattereri* (800 mm total length (TL)) foraging at the margins of a permanent pond (17°23'26" S, 44° 57' 14" W, 468 m above sea level) in the rural zone of Buritizeiro municipality, Minas Gerais state, southeastern Brazil. The snake was notable for its distended body in the stomach region, which led us to collect it. After capture, the individual regurgitated a tree frog *Scinax x-signatus* (32.4 mm snout–vent length (SVL)) and a lizard *Hemidactylus mabouia* (53.2 mm TL) lacking its tail (Fig. 1). The respective voucher specimens were later deposited at the herpetological collection of Museu de Zoologia João Moojen, Universidade Federal de Viçosa (MZUFV), Viçosa municipality, Minas Gerais state, Brazil (*P. nattereri* MZUFV 1999, *S. x-signatus* MZUFV 11738, *H. mabouia* MZUFV 1081).

Literature data concerning the diet of *P. nattereri* is scarce. FRANÇA et al. (2008), studying a snake assemblage in central Brazil, registered 22 records of small vertebrates as prey items of *P. nattereri*, of which six (27.2%) were small lizards and one (4.5%) an unidentified anuran. More recently, MESQUITA et al. (2011) reported another 16 records of vertebrate prey in the diet of this species, among them one terrestrial anuran (*Leptodactylus macrosternum*) and seven lizards, including *H. mabouia*. The proximity of resi-

dential homes to the site of observation may have favoured the capture of this lizard by *P. nattereri*, since *H. mabouia* is well adapted to modified environments and commonly found in and around human habitations in urban and rural areas (VANZOLINI et al. 1983).

Reports of arboreal frogs as part of the diet of *P. nattereri* are less common. At the site of our observation, sev-

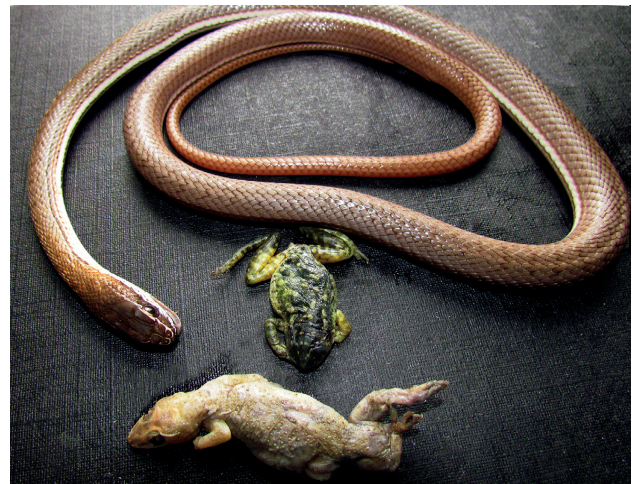


Figure 1. Adult *Philodryas nattereri* (MZUFV 1999, 800 mm total length), captured in the municipality of Buritizeiro, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with the two regurgitated prey items, i.e., adults of *Scinax x-signatus* (MZUFV 11738, 32.4 mm SVL) and *Hemidactylus mabouia* (MZUFV 1081, 53.2 mm SVL). Photo: LEANDRO B. GODINHO.

eral males of *S. x-signatus* were noticed calling from perches near the ground. It is therefore probable that the predated specimen of *S. x-signatus* had been perched on low vegetation, near the ground, when it was captured by the snake. In fact, many arboreal frogs that usually call from the ground or low vegetation have been reported as prey of other terrestrial snakes (e.g., ROCHA & VRCIBRADIC 1998, FRANÇA et al. 2008).

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