

Comunicação

Predation on the Small worm lizard *Leposternon microcephalum* (Squamata, Amphisbaenidae) by the snake *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus* (Serpentes, Colubridae, Elapomorphae) in Marechal Floriano, Espírito Santo, Brazil

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ABSTRACT Here we describe the predation of the Small worm lizard *Leposternon microcephalum* (Amphisbaenidae) by the snake *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus* (Colubridae, Elapomorphae) on 17 May 2008. This event took place at Brunoro's Farm, Marechal Floriano, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. The specimen was road killed into de farm, after stomach analysis was found an intact *L. microcephalum* less digested, confirming Afisbaenisdeos in diet of *E. quinquelineatus* and the first predation record of *L. microcephalum* by *E. quinquelineatus*.

KEY WORDS: predation, *Leposternon microcephalum*, *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus*.

INTRODUÇÃO

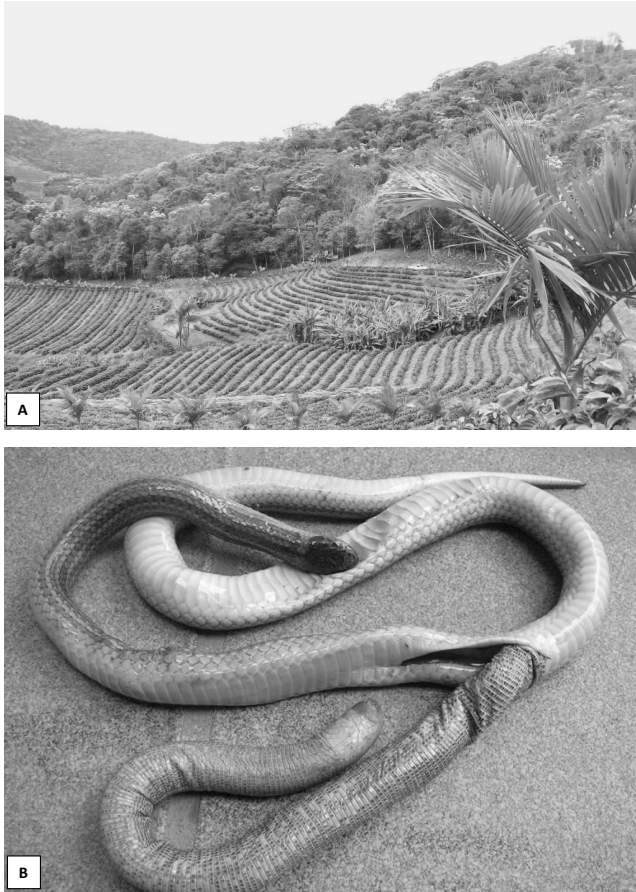
The genus *Elapomorphus* currently comprises 15 species of aquatic xenodontine terrestrial snakes widely distributed in South America, occurring from Colombia to Argentina (LEMA et al., 1983, VANZOLINI, 1948). Some published data show that these snakes feed mainly on extended vertebrates and underground vertebrates like amphisbaenas and gymnophionas (the most commonly available prey in the habitats they live), but also prey on slugs and insects (LEMA et al., 1983, VANZOLINI, 1948, HARTMANN et al., 2009). The Raddi's Lizard-Eating Snake *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus* Raddi, 1820 is a small snake, nocturnal and fossorial, inhabits opened areas, special in the borde forest, occasionally found in leaf litter in eastern of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo south to Rio Grande do Sul (FERRAREZZI, 1993), it feeds

on amphisbaenas, lizards, snakes, frogs and earthworms (MARQUES et al., 2004; HARTMANN et al., 2009) and is considered a habitual cryptozoic (CARDOSO et al., 2001).

Here we document an unusual predation event based on the examination of one specimen of *Elapomorphus quinquilineatus* collected on 17 May 2008 was collected an adult of *E. quinquelineatus* (Collected by T. M. Castro) on Brunoro Agro-avícola Farm (Figure 1A), Marechal Floriano, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil (20°26'38.75"S/41°11'05.98"O, 920 mts). Field area with historic Montana Atlantic Forest, being replaced by pastures and crops like coffee, leaving only small and isolated fragments. The area has three forest fragments as an area of legal reserve in the recovery stage. Was found an adult the adult *E. quinquelineatus* foraging on the

border of the fragment around 8:00 h p.m.. The specimen was killed by ether inhalation and has the length taken.

Figura 1. A) Brunoro Agro-avícola Farm. B) An adult of *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus* and the prey (*Leposternon microcephalum*).



We dissected the stomach of this *E. quinquelineatus* using a pair of scissors by a short incision in the medium ventral region. Upon dissection, we found that the snake (SVL 775 mm, tail length 75 mm) had ingested an adult of Small head Worm Lizard, *L. microcephalum* (SVL 410 mm, tail length 30 mm) (Figure 1B). The Small head Worm Lizard was bit coverage by a gelatinous secretion and was at an early stage of digestion and positioned head-first in the stomach, which suggests that Lizard was eaten hours before was collected. *L. microcephalum* is a fossorial lizard, has a wide area of occurrence, found in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay e Uruguay (GANS, 2005) occurring in all non amazonica brasilian area (GANS,

1971; RIBEIRO et al., 2008).

Hartmann et al., 2009 and Marques et al., 2004 reviewed the diet of Brazilian snakes and found that most species feed largery on ectothermic preys, although ophiophagys preys may require low energy expenditure due to easy ingested (Pough et. al.), and it's could be one of the most frequent item in *Elapomorphus* generous diet (LEMA et al., 1983; CARDOSO et al., 2001; MARQUES et al., 2004; HARTMANN et al., 2009). This is the first record documented of predation on *L. microcephalum* in *E. quinquelineatus* and extends our knowledge about the diet of this snake. Both examples were deposited on Zoological Collection at Museu de Biologia Prof. Mello Leitão (MBML), Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo state under the record MBML 2194 for *Elapomorphus quinquelineatus* and MBML 2195 for *Leposternon microcephalum*.

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