

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Bat consumption by *Philodryas viridissima* (Serpentes: Colubridae) in the Amazon Basin of southeastern Peru

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The rear-fanged snakes of the genus *Philodryas* typically prey upon a variety of animals, such as frogs, lizards and mammals (Cunha and Nascimento 1978, Martins and Oliveira 1998, França and Araujo 2007, Godinho *et al.* 2012). *Philodryas viridissima* (Linnaeus, 1758) is a diurnal species widely distributed through the tropical rainforests from Venezuela and Guyana to northern Argentina (Cunha and Nascimento 1993, Uetz 2016). This species is arboreal in primary and secondary tropical rainforests and disturbed areas (Martins and Oliveira 1998). Information about the diet of *P. viridissima* is scarce and the items reported in the literature have not been identified to the species level. Otto and Miller (2004) reported a failed attempt of *P. viridissima* to ingest a phyllostomid bat that was too large for the snake to swallow in Puerto

Maldonado, Madre de Dios Department, Peru. Herein, we report the successful and nocturnal predation activity of *P. viridissima* on bats. The voucher specimen is deposited in the herpetological collection of Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI), Lima, Peru.


On 3 March 2016, at 19:57 h, an adult female of *Philodryas viridissima* (CORBIDI 17229) (snout-vent length 80.3 cm, head length 2.7 cm, tail length 25.1 cm) fell from the roof of the Refugio Amazonas Lodge, located in the buffer zone of Tambopata National Reserve (12.87224° S, 69.40673° W), at an elevation of 206 m a.s.l., Madre de Dios Department, Peru. The snake was holding a recently killed bat with the posterior portion of its body and had a bulge in its belly (Figure 1). One of us (PJV) waited for the snake to eat the bat but it died 50 min after the fall. The fall to the hard wooden floor may have caused internal damage to the snake. We identified the bat as *Molossus molossus* (Pallas, 1766), and further examination revealed a second *M. molossus* in the stomach of the snake.

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Figure 1. Individual of *Philodryas viridissima* (CORBIDI 17229) fallen from the roof, holding a recently killed bat with the posterior portion of its body.

The insectivorous, medium-sized bats of the genus *Molossus* (Gardner 1965, Pari *et al.* 2015) usually roost in house roofs or hollow trees (Goodwin 1970). Some species of *Molossus* are crepuscular and have a short foraging time, spending less than one hour out of the roost (Chase *et al.* 1991, Fenton *et al.* 1998, Ramírez-Chavez *et al.* 2008, Esbérard and Bergallo 2010, Holland *et al.* 2011). Hence, we suspect that *P. viridissima* attacked the bats while they were resting under the inn's roof. The closest reference to this behavior is that of Barros *et al.* (2015), who recorded an individual of *Philodryas olfersii* (Lichtenstein, 1823) eating a molossid bat, *Nyctinomops laticaudatus* (E. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1805), by day. This report is the first record of nocturnal hunting activity for *P. viridissima*, which previously has been considered a diurnal species.

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