

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A new prey item for the snake *Boiruna maculata* (Serpentes: Dipsadidae) in the yungas of Bolivia

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Palavras-chave: *Abrocoma* cf. *boliviensis*, consumo de roedor, dieta, novo item alimentar.

Boiruna (Zaher, 1996) contains medium to large, slender, opisthoglyphous neotropical snakes. They are diurnal in terrestrial and arboreal habitats (Carreira Vidal 2002, Leynaud *et al.* 2006). The distributional range includes western and central Argentina, southern Bolivia, southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The genus contains two species—*B. maculata* and *B. sertaneja* (Zaher 1996, Leynaud and Bucher 1999, Scott Jr. *et al.* 2006)—one of which, *B. maculata*, was recorded in Bolivia (Gonzales and Reichle 2003, Aguayo 2009). *Boiruna maculata* is mainly ophiophagous, but its diet also includes a wide variety of small vertebrates, including amphibians (*Hypsiboas* sp.), birds (*Cacicus chrysopterus*, *Chauna torquata*, *Gallus gallus*, *Turdus rufiventris*), fishes (*Symbranchus marmoratus*), lizards (*Ameiva ameiva*, *Mabuya* sp., *Tropidurus torquatus*), mammals (*Akodon serrensis*, *Rattus rattus*), and snakes (*Atractus*

sp., *Crotalus durissus*, *Bothrops lanceolatus*, *Bothrops alternatus*, *Erythrolamprus almadensis*, *Philodryas patagoniensis*, *Oxyrhopus petolarius*, *Oxyrhopus trigeminus*, *Sibynomorphus mikani*, *Sibynomorphus* sp., *Thamnodynastes* sp., *Xenodon dorbignyi*) (Carreira Vidal 2002, Costa Pinto and Lema 2002, Gallardo *et al.* 2006, Gaiarsa *et al.* 2013).

On 14 August 2006, a dead adult female of *Boiruna maculata* (985 mm SVL) was found at a stream near a cultivated field (18°05'43.35" S, 63°54'46.57" W, 1898 m a.s.l.), in the rural region of La Yunga National Park and Amboró National Area of Integrated Management (PN ANMI Amboró), Province of Mairana, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This area is in the Yungas Boliviano-Peruanos (Yungas) and is characterized by humid evergreen cloud forest composed of small- to medium-sized trees, at elevations between 1000 and 4200 m (Ibisch and Merida 2003). We found a pregnant adult female of the abrocomid rodent *Abrocoma* cf. *boliviensis* with a tail length of 443.2 mm in the snake's stomach (Figure 1); this rodent is endemic to Bolivia and considered to be critically endangered

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Figure 1. Top: *Boiruna maculata* CBG-701, SVL 985 mm. Bottom: *Abrocoma* cf. *boliviensis*, CBG-390, removed from the stomach of CBG-701.

(CR), with a Bolivian distribution restricted to the Department of Santa Cruz (Tarifa and Moya 2009). This rodent recently had been ingested headfirst, and there were no signs of decomposition. Both specimens are deposited in the vertebrate collection at the Centro de Biodiversidad y Genética–Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba, Bolivia (*B. maculata*, CBG-701; *A. cf. boliviensis*, CBG-390).

Species of *Boiruna* are mainly ophiophagous, with their most frequently consumed prey being snakes. Rodents of the genus *Akodon* have been recorded in the diet of *B. maculata* (Costa Pinto and Lema 2002, Gaiarsa *et al.* 2013), but our observation is the first record of the genus *Abrocoma* for the species in Bolivia. These results confirm a generalist diet for *B. maculata*, as observed in other individuals of this species.

The feeding habits of *Boiruna maculata* are well documented, as is the geographic variability in the types of prey consumed. Hartmann (2001)

proposed that this variation may be correlated with increased availability of prey, the snake's activity patterns, and/or the phylogenetic relationships of *B. maculata*, rather than a resource preference pattern because the most frequently consumed prey are not a limiting resource in the environment.

Because rodents seem to be more abundant than amphibians or lizards in the Yungas of Bolivia (Tarifa *et al.* 2007), pseudoboini snakes such as *B. maculata* may be important controllers of rodents in areas close to villages and agricultural fields where higher numbers of rodents have been observed (Cahill *et al.* 2010).

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