



FIG. 1. *Micrurus corallinus* in copulation (arrow). The female is stretched out, and the male is positioned above the female with his tail wrapped around hers.

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MICRURUS CORALLINUS (Coralsnake). REPRODUCTION.

Coral snakes have a characteristic aposematic color pattern, but their semifossorial habits (Campbell and Lamar 2004. *The Venomous Reptiles of the Western Hemisphere*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York. 870 pp.) makes it difficult to sight specimens in the field. *Micrurus corallinus* has a wide distribution in the Atlantic Forest biome of South America, preferentially in areas with high humidity, such as the Serra do Mar (Marques et al. 2006. *South Amer. J. Herpetol.* 1:114–120). This species displays seasonal reproduction, concentrating its activities mainly during the spring (Marques 1996. *Amphibia-Reptilia* 17:277–285), and shows female-biased sexual size dimorphism in length, which may be related to the absence of combat (Marques et al. 2013. *Herpetologica* 69:58–66). Moreover, there is possibly a sexual aggregation behavior where many males may compete for a female (Almeida Santos et al. 2006. *Herpetol. J.* 16:371–376). Here we report an observation, made by an amateur photographer, of the first copulation report of *M. corallinus* in nature during summer and the first photographic record of such behavior.

The snakes were found on 8 January 2016 at 1123 h, on a pathway of Saco do Céu - Freguesia de Santana, near Japariz beach in the municipality of Angra dos Reis – RJ, Brazil, 10 m from a small pool of water. The female was identified by greater SVL and had its body fully stretched along the path. The male's tail curved over the female's tail in copula (Fig. 1). The snakes tried to flee when touched with a stick, but could not because they were linked by the tails. The copulation was observed during the day, which reinforces the diurnal activity of this species (Marques 1996, *op. cit.*). The coral snakes were on the surface of the ground between shrubs and rocks, partially hidden in the leaf litter. The copulation period described for this species is restricted to spring, from October to November (Marques et al. 2013, *op. cit.*), so the observation of summer mating implies that other reproductive events also may occur later. On the coast, due to the hot weather, breeding season may be extended further, which was observed for other females of this species (E. Bassi, pers. obs.). Thus, oviposition may occur in late summer and hatching in early autumn, increasing the hatching period of offspring during the dry season.

We thank Pedro Carvalho for providing the photo, Cristiene Rodrigues Martins and Rogério Botion Lopes for preparing photo, and Ivan Nery Cardoso for English review.