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## NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

**BOTHROPS JARARACUSSU** (Jararacussu). **OPHIOPHAGY.** Pitvipers of the genus *Bothrops* are diet generalists, feeding both on endothermic and ectothermic prey (Martins et al. 2002. *In* Schuett et al. [eds.], *Biology of the Vipers*, pp. 307–328. Eagle Mountain Publ., Eagle Mountain, Utah). The most important ectothermic prey are frogs, lizards, and centipedes, whereas snakes are unusual prey. At least nine species of *Bothrops*, including *B. jararacussu*, eat snakes occasionally (Martins et al., *op. cit.*). Here we report on a *B. jararacussu* found swallowing a snake in the wild.

A *B. jararacussu* female (SVL = 920 mm, tail = 121 mm, mass = 305 g, IB 63886) was found during the morning of 4 June 2001 on a dirt road crossing a stretch of Atlantic forest at Juquitiba, São Paulo (23°57'S, 47°03'W), southeastern Brazil. The collector (L. A. Kobata) related that a portion of the pitviper's prey (ca. 30 cm) protruded from its mouth and that its body was wrinkled. The pitviper was collected and put into a box, where it disgorged a male individual of the arboreal colubrid, *Chironius bicarinatus* (SVL = 950 mm, tail = 412 mm, mass = 220 g, IB 63887). The prey/predator mass ratio (0.72) was high (cf. Martins et al., *op. cit.*).

Although viperids have the ability to subdue and ingest enormous meals (Greene 1992. *In* Campbell and Brodie [eds.], *Biology of the Pitvipers*, pp. 107–117. Selva, Tyler, Texas), the snake prey was much longer than its predator. The excessive length of prey likely hindered the movements of the pitviper, and caused the wrinkles on its body. It is possible that due to the elongate form of this particular prey type, the predator had difficulty to assess the actual body length of its prey. The prey had signs of hemorrhage in five distinct parts of its body. Strike with bite and release is the usual tactic employed by snakes of the genus *Bothrops* when preying on rodents (Sazima 1992. *In* Campbell and Brodie [eds.], *Biology of the Pitvipers*, pp. 199–216. Selva, Tyler, Texas), whereas frogs are held after the initial strike until swallowed (Sazima 1991. *Copeia* 1991:245–248). Ectothermic prey such as lizards and snakes are presumably captured using the bite and hold tactic. *Chironius bicarinatus* is an agile and irritable snake that readily retaliates against attacks (Sazima and Haddad 1992. *In* L. P. C. Morellato [org.], *História Natural da Serra do Japi: Ecologia e Preservação de uma Área Florestal no Sudeste do Brasil*, pp. 212–236. Campinas, Editora UNICAMP) and is very hard to capture (pers. obs.). Thus, the snake preyed on by the *B. jararacussu* most likely struggled after the first hold and was bitten several times by its predator, which would explain the multiple hemorrhage marks.

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