

OXYRHOPUS RHOMBIFER (False Coral Snake).

PREDATION. *Oxyrhopus rhombifer*, a medium-sized colubrid with a coral snake color pattern, occurs from the Amazon River south to central Argentina (Peters and Orejas-Miranda. 1986. Catalogue of Neotropical Squamata. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 347 pp.). We are unaware of any published accounts of predation on *O. rhombifer*. Here we report an instance of predation by the Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia* (Aves: Strigidae). The observation occurred on 26 May 2001 at 2145 h on an unpaved road crossing an area of pristine “campo sujo” (shrubby grassland of the cerrado, savanna-like formation; 22°12'30"S, 47°54'45"W, 760 m elev.) at Itirapina Ecological Station (IES), municipality of Brotas, São Paulo State, southeastern Brazil. During night driving to search for snakes we spotted a Burrowing Owl on the ground; when approached by the car, the owl flew away carrying a snake within its claws; the owl landed ca. 50 m from the site where we first saw it, quickly got into the grassland, and flew away again. We searched the area and found its prey at roadside. . It was an adult male *O. rhombifer* (estimated SVL ca. 420 mm, tail with tip lacking, probably removed by the owl, 104 mm, estimated mass ca. 24 g). The anterior 190 mm of the body was missing, and injuries were evident in the cloacal region and at midbody.

Martins et al. (2003. Herpetol. Rev. 34:147–148) reported on a *Bothrops alternatus* as prey of a Burrowing Owl at IES and suggested that snakes may be more frequently eaten than the examination of owl pellets suggests. Valdujo and Nogueira (2000. Herpetol. Rev. 31:45) reported on a *B. neuwiedi pauloensis* as prey of a Burrowing Owl in another area of cerrado at Mineiros, Goiás state, central Brazil.

The voucher specimen of *O. rhombifer* is deposited in the Museu de História Natural, Universidade Estadual de Campinas (ZUEC

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