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# Paleosuchus trigonatus (Smooth-fronted Caiman) Predation

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nest attendance by wild *C. siamensis*. Kanwatanakid-Savini et al. (2012, *op. cit.*) found a female concealed in dense grass beside a nest in Kaeng Krachan National Park, Thailand that fled from researchers, and Bezuijen et al. (2013, *op. cit.*) stated that a nest in Laos was “guarded fiercely by a female of TL 2.8–2.9 m”. Third, although female crocodylians are known to attend nests after the clutch has been removed (Grigg and Kirshner 2015, *op. cit.*), our observation appears to be the only reported instance of a female crocodylian actively defending a nest well beyond the date when the clutch should have hatched. Our observation thus raises interesting questions regarding the cues responsible for terminating nest attendance by female crocodylians.

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**PALEOSUCHUS TRIGONATUS** (Smooth-fronted Caiman). **PRE-DATION.** *Paleosuchus trigonatus* is a small caiman present in French Guiana where it occupies rainforest and wetlands habitats. With a primarily nocturnal lifestyle, as well as a preference for burrows and caves for shelter, daytime observations of their behavior are rare (Magnusson and Lima 1991. *J. Herpetol.* 25:41–48; Lemaire et al. 2018. *Crocodyle Specialist Group Newsl.* 37:18–21). *Paleosuchus trigonatus* has a diverse diet that includes a variety of arboreal and terrestrial species such as monkeys, porcupines, agoutis, armadillos, fish, lizards, and snakes, but there is little information on the snake species consumed (Magnusson et al. 1987. *J. Herpetol.* 21:85–95; Moldowan et al. 2016. *S. Am. J. Herpetol.* 11:176–182). Here, we report an adult *P. trigonatus* feeding on an adult *Corallus caninus* (Emerald Tree Boa).

On 21 April 2014 at 1145 h, we observed a *P. trigonatus* at the edge of the Arataye River, close to Nouragues Ecological Research Station in the Nature Reserve Les Nouragues, French Guiana (4.04°N, 52.67°W; WGS 84; 30 m elev.). Initially submerged under water on a shallow sandy bank of a small river island, the caiman emerged on the bank with an adult individual of *C. caninus* in its jaws (Fig. 1) that appeared freshly killed or possibly still alive. After a few minutes, the caiman retreated back into the river and disappeared under water with the prey. *Corallus caninus* is primarily an arboreal boid snake (Henderson et al. 2013. *Biol.*

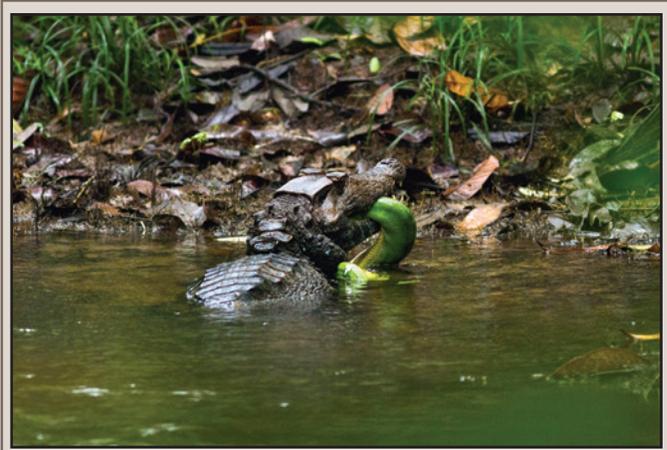


FIG. 1. A large *Paleosuchus trigonatus* feeding on a large *Corallus caninus* in the Nature Reserve Les Nouragues, French Guiana.

PHOTO BY ANDRIUS PASUKONIS

*J. Linn. Soc.* 109:466–475), that is occasionally found on the ground. Both *P. trigonatus* and *C. caninus* are regularly observed in this area, and to our knowledge this is the first observation of *P. trigonatus* preying on *C. caninus*.

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#### SQUAMATA — AMPHISBAENIANS

**AMPHISBAENA VERMICULARIS** (Wagler’s Worm Lizard). **PRE-DATION.** *Amphisbaena vermicularis* is a small (up to 325 mm total length) fossorial amphisbaenid that is rarely observed above ground with a distribution from northeastern Brazil to Bolivia (Gans 2005. *Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 289:1–130). The Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia*, ranges from western North America to Tierra del Fuego in South America (Weick 2006. *Owls [Strigiformes] Annotated and Illustrated Checklist*. Springer-Verlag, Berlin. 384 pp.) and are well-known reptile predators. For example, *A. cunicularia* feed on colubrid and blind snakes (Herse 2016. *Southwest. Nat.* 61:341–348; Cláudio et al. 2017. *Herpetol. Notes.* 10:429–431) and lizards of many different families from temperate arid and desert habitats (Carevic et al. 2012. *J. Arid. Environ.* 97:237–241; Herse 2016, *op. cit.*) to dry tropical regions (Vieira and Teixeira 2008. *Bol. Mus. Biol. Mello Leitão* 23:5–14; Cadena-Ortiz et al. 2016. *Rev. Bras. Ornitol.* 24:122–128). Until now, there was no record of *A. cunicularia* predation on an amphisbaenid.

At 1020 h on 10 June 2013, at the Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil (12.26666°S, 38.96666°W; WGS 84; 223 m elev.), we observed an adult *A. cunicularia* perched in a tree ca. 5 m above ground with an *A. vermicularis* in its talons. The *A. vermicularis*, which appeared to be an adult, was writhing as it tried to escape from the owl.