Jorge H. Valdez-Villavicencio[1], Bradford D. Hollingsworth[2], and Patricia Galina-Tessaro[3]

[1]*Conservación de Fauna del Noroeste, A.C., Ensenada, Baja California 22785, Mexico.*
E-mail: j_h_valdez@yahoo.com.mx

[2]*Department of Herpetology, San Diego Natural History Museum, P.O. Box 121390, San Diego, California 92112, United States. E-mail*: bhollingsworth@snhm.org

[3]*Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste, La Paz, Baja California Sur, 23096, Mexico.*
E-mail: pgalina04@cibnor.mx

Reptilia: Squamata (snakes)

***Boa imperator* Daudin, 1803. Diet.** The Mesoamerican Boa Constrictor, *Boa imperator*, is distributed from northern Mexico, in Sonora and Tamaulipas, to northwestern South America (Hynková et al., 2009). The species is composed of populations previously assigned to three subspecies of *B. constrictor*: *B. c. imperator*, *B. c. longicauda*, and *B. c. sabogae* (Hynková et al., 2009); recently, however, Card et al. (*In Press*) proposed recognition of the lineage along the Pacific coast of Mexico, west of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as a distinct species, *B. sigma*. The diet of the snakes of the genus *Boa* is broad and includes a variety of mammals, birds, frogs, and lizards (Solórzano, 2004; Pérez-Higareda et al., 2007). At least 54 different prey items have been reported in the literature for mainland *Boa*, but reports of bird consumption are relatively rare (Boback, 2005). Most of the birds accounted as prey are passerines, but domestic fowl, New World vultures, and hummingbirds have been reported in the diet of *B. imperator* (Boback, 2004; Platt et al., 2016).

On 6 December 2015 at ca. 1200 h, at Hotel Xixim, ca. 9.7 km NNE of Celestún, Yucatán, Mexico (20.9439 N, 90.3708 W, WGS 84; elev. 5 m), we observed a juvenile *B. imperator* attempting to consume an adult Tropical Mockingbird, *Mimus gilvus* (Fig. 1A). The incident took place above a covered water tank located under a tree, in a shaded area with relatively dense undergrowth. The vegetation at the site was disturbed tropical dry forest. The snake was firmly coiled around the bird's body and had swallowed it to around the chest level (Fig. 1B). By the time we arrived the bird was dead, so we are not certain if it was a predatory or scavenging event. Scavenging has been reported for the closely related Puerto Rican Boa *Chilabothrus inornatus* (Rodríguez-Durán, 1996), but the fact that the snake was strongly coiled around the bird's body suggests the event was predatory. After around 5 min of observing the occurrence, we left the area to avoid further disturbing the snake. We returned to the site ca. 30 min later and the snake had left, leaving the bird behind (Fig. 1C). We are unaware of what caused the snake to desist ingestion, but possibly the food item was too large or the snake was disturbed by us and some of the hotel's workers, as they had approached to observe it.

Mimus gilvus has been reported in the diet of introduced *B. constrictor* in Aruba (Quick et al., 2005; Bushar et al., 2015), but to our knowledge the incident reported herein constitutes the first record of either attempted or achieved ingestion of *M. gilvus* by *B. imperator*.

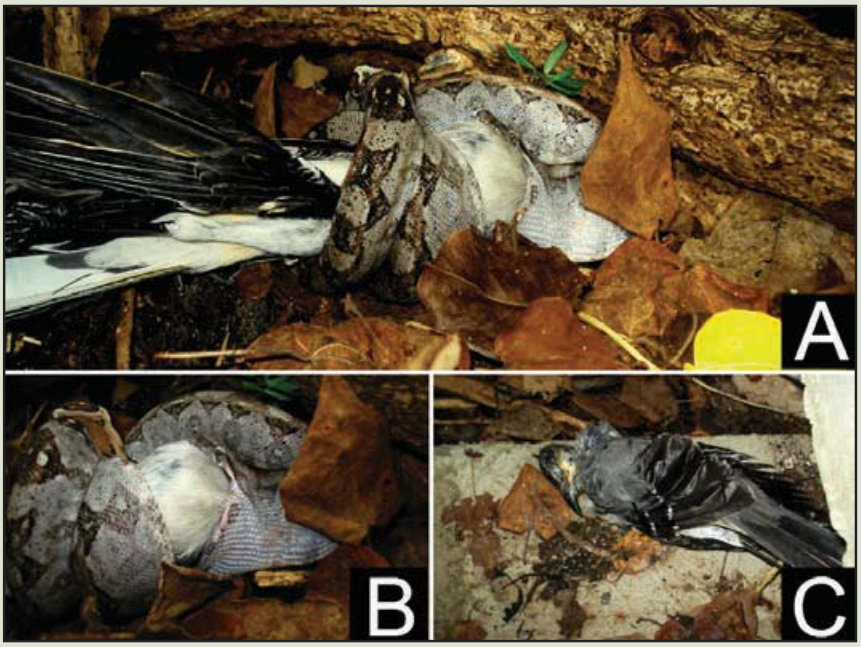

Fig. 1. (A) Ingestion attempt of *Mimus gilvus* by *Boa imperator* at Hotel Xixim, ca. 9.7 km NNE of Celestún, Yucatán, Mexico; (B) a close-up of the snake's head during the swallowing process; and (C) the abandoned bird carcass.
© Carlos J. Pavón Vázquez

Acknowledgments.—We thank Michael J. Andersen and Christopher C. Witt for helping to identify *Mimus gilvus*, Jonathan B. Losos for logistical support, and Uri O. García-Vázquez for allowing us to conduct fieldwork under a collecting permit issued to him by the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (permit number FAUT-0243). This project/publication was made possible in part through the support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the John Templeton Foundation.

Literature Cited

Boback, S. M. 2004. Natural History Notes. *Boa constrictor* (Boa Constrictor). Diet. Herpetological Review 35: 175.

Boback, S. M. 2005. Natural history and conservation of island boas (*Boa constrictor*) in Belize. Copeia 2005: 879–884.

Bushar, L. M., R. G. Reynolds, S. Tucker, L. C. Pace, W. I. Lutterschmidt, R. A. Odum, and H. K. Reinert. 2015. Genetic characterization of an invasive *Boa constrictor* population on the Caribbean island of Aruba. Journal of Herpetology 49: 602–610.

Card, D. C., D. R. Schield, R. H. Adams, A. B. Corbin, B. W. Perry, A. L. Andrew, G. I. M. Pasquesi, E. N. Smith, T. Jezkova, S. M. Boback, W. Booth, and T. A. Castoe. *In Press*. Phylogeographic and population genetic analyses reveal multiple species of *Boa* and independent origins of insular dwarfism. Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution.

Hynková, I., Z. Starostova, and D. Frynta. 2009. Mitochondrial DNA variation reveals recent evolutionary history of main *Boa constrictor* clades. Zoological Science 26: 623–631.

Pérez-Higareda, G., M. A. López-Luna, and H. M. Smith. 2007. Serpientes de la región de los Tuxtlas, Veracruz, México. Guía de identificación ilustrada. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México D.F., Mexico.

Platt, S. G., T. R. Rainwater, J. C. Meerman, and S. M. Miller. 2016. Nature Notes. Notes on the diet, foraging behavior, and venom of some snakes in Belize. Mesoamerican Herpetology 3: 162–170.

Quick, J. S., H. K. Reinert, E. R. DeCuba, and R. A. Odum. 2005. Recent occurrence and dietary habits of *Boa constrictor* on Aruba, Dutch West Indies. Journal of Herpetology 39: 304–307.

Rodríguez-Durán, A. 1996. Foraging ecology of the Puerto Rican Boa (*Epicrates inornatus*): bat predation, carrion feeding, and piracy. Journal of Herpetology 30: 533–536.

Solórzano, A. 2004. Serpientes de Costa Rica: Distribución, Taxonomía e Historia Natural / Snakes of Costa Rica: Distribution, Taxonomy, and Natural History. Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio), Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica.

Carlos J. Pavón-Vázquez[1], Levi N. Gray[2], Brittney A. White[2], and Alexis S. Harrison[3]

[1]*Laboratorio de Herpetología, Museo de Zoología, Departamento de Biología Evolutiva, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Apartado Postal 70-153, Mexico 04510, D.F., Mexico.*
E-mail: cjpvunam@gmail.com (Corresponding author)

[2]*Department of Biology and Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, United States.*

[3]*Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 01238, United States.*

***Clelia clelia* (Daudin, 1803). Predation.** *Clelia clelia* is a large snake that can reach an estimated total length (TL) of 2,750 mm (Solórzano, 2004). It also has a large geographic distribution extending from Guatemala to western Peru west of the Andes, and to central Bolivia, Argentina, and northern Brazil east of the Andes (McCranie, 2011). This species is common in the Mosquitia region of northeastern Honduras, in areas of primary broadleaf rainforest. *Clelia clelia* is listed as a CITES (II) species.

On 27 July 2015, about three hours after nightfall, my group captured a subadult *Clelia* (slightly less than 2 m TL) crawling on the ground in undisturbed broadleaf rainforest. We placed the snake in a cloth bag for photographing the next day, and carried it for 3.5 h before returning to our campsite. The campsite was at a site called Bachi ("catfish" in English) Kiamp (15°08.654'N, 84°24.942'W; elev. 40 m) that belongs to the Miskito people.

The following morning we noticed a stench coming from the bag with the *Clelia*, and upon opening it discovered several regurgitated prey items. The snake was bleeding from the mouth, so we released immediately it in primary forest. Apparently the bleeding had resulted from the regurgitation process, as we handled the snake gently when capturing it. The regurgitated items included a young *C. clelia*, still with its juvenile color pattern, an adult of the teiid *Holcosus festivus*, and two small mammals that appear to be mouse pups (Figs. 1A, B).

McCranie (2011; also see references cited therein) reported the following food items for *C. clelia*: rats and other small mammals; birds; various lizards; and various snakes, including the venomous *Bothrops asper* and other viperids. *Clelia clelia* is a generalist feeder well known for feeding on venomous viperid snakes. Lee (1996; also see references cited therein) reported similar food items, and Solórzano (2004) reported a similar varied diet, but added three venomous viperid species from Costa Rica: *Atropoides mexicanus*, *Lachesis stenophrys*, and *Porthidium nasutum*. Solórzano (2004: 204) also made the general feeding statement of "small mammals and lizards." Chavarría and Barrio-Amorós (2014) added the venomous snake *Bothriechis schlegelii* from Costa Rica. Gaiarsa et al. (2013; also see references listed therein) similarly listed various snakes and lizards as prey, plus small mammals and birds, and made the first report of snake eggs as prey of a Brazilian specimen.

This apparently is the first report of cannibalism in *C. clelia*. Also, although teiid lizards have been reported in the diet of *C. clelia* (see above references), this report is the first to include *H. festivus* in the diet of this species.