EUNECTES MURINUS (Green Anaconda). XANTHISM.

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and try to escape; however, when the observer approached the snake again, it again became still, and when he caught the snake, it quickly used thanatosis once again as a defense mechanism. This time the snake was placed back on the ground, but near a mound of vegetation, and when released, it returned to its normal posture and quickly moved away, hiding in the vegetation. Based on our observations, it appears that *D. margaritiferus* might take advantage of areas with abundant vegetation to escape, whereas in areas without much vegetation, it uses a passive defensive mechanism, such as thanatosis, until it finds the right moment to escape. Similarly, and coinciding with the observations of Farr and Lazcano (2011, *op. cit.*), the snake remained motionless during the time of capture, but in our observations and contradicting Farr and Lazcano (2011, *op. cit.*), the snake did not move its tail at any time.

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DRYMOBIUS RHOMBIFER **(Esmarald Racer). PREDATION.** *Drymobius rhombifer* is a widely distributed Central and South American colubrid. Although it is common and diurnal, little of its ecology, including its potential predators, have been described (e.g., Savage 2002. The Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica: a Herpetofauna between Two Continents, between Two Seas. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois. 934 pp.; Duellman 2005. Cusco Amazónico. Comstock Pub. Associates, Ithaca, New York. 433 pp.; Bernarde et al. 2011. Biota Neotropica 11.3:117–44.). On 4 June 2002, between 1600 and 1615 h, we found a dead and headless *D. rhombifer* (ca. 50 cm total body length) near the Cocha Cashu Biological Station (11.8750°S, 71.4086°W; WGS 84, 400 m elev.) in the Madre de Dios region of southeastern Peru. The snake was found in floodplain forest and positioned on a log ca. 150 cm off the ground. We set a camera trap prior to leaving the snake which captured a *Buteogallus schistaceus* (Slate-coloured Hawk) feeding on the snake at 1618 h (Fig. 1). It is likely the same individual that killed the snake; however, it is impossible to determine if the log was the exact location of the predation event. We would like to thank the assistants and field personnel of Cocha Cashu Biological Station.

PHOTO BY RENATA LEITE

Fig. 1. *Buteogallus schistaceus* feeding on a *Drymobius rhombifer* in the Madre de Dios region of southeastern Peru.

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EUNECTES MURINUS **(Green Anaconda). XANTHISM.** *Eunectes murinus* is the largest snake species in the Neotropics. The species has a wide distribution and inhabits several ecoregions, including Llanos, Amazon Forest, Pantanal, Cerrado, and Atlantic Forest (Rivas 2016. Natural History of the Green Anaconda [*Eunectes murinus*]: with Emphasis on Its Reproductive Biology. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, Coppell, Texas. 206 pp.; Nogueira et al. 2019. J. Herpetol. 14:1–276). The species typically exhibits an olive green or brown color, with some dorsal spots and light-colored lateral ocelli in the center. Moreover, it is the only species of the genus that has four cephalic stripes, usually brown, red, or orange (Dirksen 2002. Anakondas. Münster: Natur-und-Tier-Verlag, Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia. 190 pp.). In 2020, an *E. murinus* was captured by the Batalhão de Polícia Ambiental in an urban area of the Municipality of Belém, Pará, Brazil, exhibiting an extremely light yellowish-brown color with no lateral ocelli spots and brownish gray (Fig. 1). This adult specimen (2.56 m total length; 7 kg) is in the Centro de Herpetologia da Amazônia (license 2018/0000002540), in good health.

Due to the predominance of yellow color, we classified the specimen as xanthic (Bortiero et al. 2021. Salamandra 57:124–138), representing the first case in *E. murinus*. Another

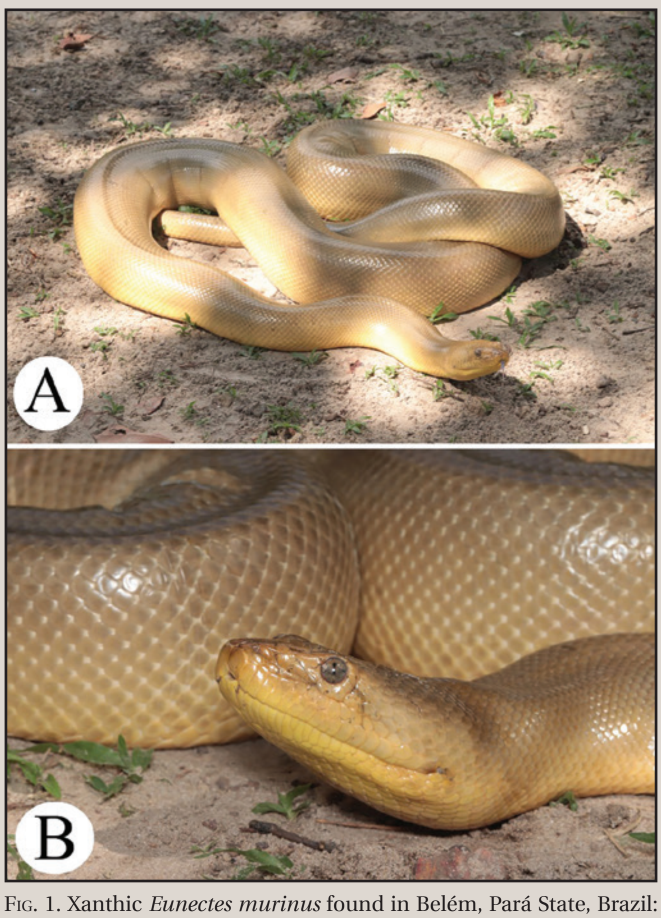

Fig. 1. Xanthic *Eunectes murinus* found in Belém, Pará State, Brazil: A) photo showing absence of body spots; B) photo showing eye color.

remarkable aspect of this record is that the *E. murinus* does not exhibit dorsal spots and lateral ocelli, instead exhibiting a homogeneous color pattern. Xanthic snakes can synthesize small amounts of melanin and have colored eyes (Bechtel 1995. Reptile and Amphibian Color Variants: Colors, Patterns, and Scales. Krieger Publishing Co., Malabar, Florida. 206 pp.), as is the case for this snake. Color anomalies are rare in wild snakes (Bortiero et al. 2021, *op. cit.*) and could increase mortality by exposing the animal to increased predation risk. The large size of *E. murinus* neonates and its defensive behaviors may have been a factor in the survival of this individual in the wild.

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***FARANCIA ABACURA* (Red-bellied Mudsnake). PREDATION.** *Farancia abacura* is a semi-aquatic, fossorial, colubrid snake species that inhabits a variety of freshwater wetland habitats in the southeastern United States (Wright and Wright 1957. Handbook of Snakes of the United States and Canada. Vol. 1. Comstock, Ithaca, New York. 564 pp.) but occasionally makes terrestrial movements (Steen et al. 2013. Herpetol. Rev. 44:208–213). Documented predators are *Alligator mississippiensis* (American Alligator; Palmer and Braswell 1995. Reptiles of North Carolina. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 444 pp.; Rice. 2004. M.S. Thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. 89 pp.), *Agkistrodon piscivorus* (Cottonmouth; Rossman 1959. Quart. J. Florida Acad. Sci. 22:207225; Burkett 1966. Univ. Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist. 17:435–491; Palmer and Braswell 1995, *op. cit.*; Plummer et al. 2020. Wetlands 40:2489–2498), *Drymarchon couperi* (Eastern Indigo Snake; Stevenson et al. 2010. Southeast. Nat. 9:118), *Nerodia rhombifer* (Diamond-backed Watersnake; Auffenberg 1948. Herpetologica 4:193), *Ardea alba* (Great Egret; Abercrombie and Hofmann 2021. Herpetol. Rev. 52:666), and *Lutra canadensis* (River Otter; Tumlison and Karnes 1987. Mammalia 51:225232). Based on damage to implanted transmitters, Plummer et al. (2020, *op. cit.*) speculated that small mammals had depredated two radio-tracked *F. abacura* in Arkansas.

Fig. 1. Screen capture from a video of an Everglades Mink (*Neovison vison evergladensis*) dragging a *Farancia abacura* across a road in Collier County, Florida, USA, on 1 January 2022.

On 1 January 2022 at 1507 h, HC recorded a video of a *Neovison vison evergladensis* (Everglades Mink) running across a dirt road while dragging a limp snake by its neck (Fig. 1). Approximately 8 min earlier, the mink had crossed the road in the opposite direction without the snake and 4 min later, the mink briefly stuck its head out of the bushes along the road with the snake in its mouth. This video from Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Collier County, Florida, USA, was reposted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission without initially identifying the species of "giant snake" (http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/40707). We zoomed in on one frame of the video and observed pink bands on the lower sides of the snake's body, confirming our suspicion that it was an *F. abacura*. This mink subspecies is listed as state threatened and occurs as a disjunct population in southern Florida, where it typically inhabits shallow freshwater marshes, salt marshes, and swamp forests (Humphrey and Zinn 1982. J. Wildl. Manage. 46:375381). The snake was ca. three times the length of the mink's body. If this were an adult mink, we estimate the *F. abacura* measured ca. 120 cm total length. An Everglades Mink contained scales of *Nerodia* sp. (watersnake; Smith 1980. South Florida Research Center Report T-555, Homestead, Florida. 17 pp.) in its intestines, and mink in other states have been reported preying on *Nerodia*, *Thamnophis*, and *Pantherophis* (Hamilton 1940; J. Wildl. Manage. 4:8084; Sealander 1943. J. Wildl. Manage. 7:411417; Wilson 1954. J. Wildl. Manage. 18:199207; Korschgen 1958. J. Mammal. 39:521527).

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***HEBIUS VIBAKARI* (Asian Japanese Keelback). DIET.** *Hebius* (previously *Amphiesma*) *vibakari* is a small to medium-sized natricine distributed throughout east Asia, including Russia (Primorskiy and Khabarovskiy territories, Amurskaya Oblast), northeast China (Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning), Korea (the Korean Peninsula and Jeju Island), and Japan (Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu, and Ryukyu Islands; Song 2007. Korean J. Environ. Biol. 25:124–138; Maslova et al. 2018. Nat. Conserv. Res. 3:61–72). *Hebius vibakari* is found in a variety of habitats, including forests, grasslands, agricultural lands, coastal areas, and at the outskirts of villages and cities (Maslova et al. 2018. Nat. Conserv. Res. 3:61–72). There are anecdotal reports of *H. vibakari* feeding on frogs, tadpoles, and loaches (Song 2007, *op. cit.*). In addition, there are two records of earthworm remains observed within the stomachs of *H. vibakari* collected from Jeju Island in the Republic of Korea and Izu Island in Japan (Webb et al. 1962. Univ. Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist. 15:149–173; Hasegawa 1990. Nat. Hist. Res. 1:81–84). Here we report the first direct behavioral observations of *H. vibakari* feeding on earthworms in the field.

At 0931 h on 31 July 2021, we observed an *H. vibakari* individual (male, 16.6 cm SVL, 4.2 cm tail length) feeding on an earthworm on a forest trail on Oeyeon Island, Boryeong-si,