the diet of the Aesculapian Snake (see in GRILLITSCH et al. 1983 and VEITH 1991). LUISELLI & RUGIERO (1993) studied the food habits of 32 specimens of arboreal Aesculapian Snake in Italy, and did not find either birds or eggs in the diet. They could not answer the question whether this arboreal snake eats more birds than do terrestrial ones. Such "flying" food can only be an occasional source for this opportunistic species (cf. BARUŠ & OLIVA et al. 1992; BÖHME 1993). However, one can suppose that sometimes it can forage also non-typical prey (e.g., bats roosting in roof attics or tree-hollows during summer days can provide well concentrated amounts of food). This hypothesis has also been corroborated by the observation of an Aesculapian Snake occurring under a nursery colony of Lesser Horseshoe Bats *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (BECHSTEIN, 1800) in a roof attic. Chiropterologists caught the snake just creeping along the wood frame to the bats (KOSELJ & ZAGMAJSTER 2001). Certainly, European snakes do not have a significant influence on bat populations. However, locally, they may be specialized for eating bats, similar to some cases observed in tropical regions (cf. SCHÄTTI 1984).

REFERENCES: BARUŠ, V. & OLIVA, O. (Eds.) (1992): Plazy - Reptilia. Fauna ČSFR; Vol. 26; Prague, Academia, pp. 222. BÖHME, W. (1993): *Elaphe longissima* (LAURENTI, 1768) – Äskulapnatter; pp. 331-372; In: BÖHME, W. (Ed.): Handbuch der Reptilien und Amphibien Europas; Vol. 3, Echsen I; Wiesbaden Aula Verlag. GRILLITSCH, B. & GRILLITSCH, H. & HÄUPL, M. & TIEDEMANN, F. (1983): Lurche und Kriechtiere Niederösterreichs. Wien (Fakultas), pp. 176. HAENSEL, R. & HAENSEL, J. & CLAUS, W. & RITTER, K. (2001): Besuch der Fledermaushöhle (Goa Lawah) im Ostteil der Insel Bali.- Nyctalus, Berlin; (N.F.) 7(6): 646-652. KOSELJ, K. & ZAGMAJSTER, M. (2001): Zanimivi opažanji gožev v prebivališčih netopirjev v Sloveniji.- Temporaria, Informativni bilten Societas herpetologica Slovenica, Ljubljana; 5(1/2): 21-23. LUISELLI, L. & RUGIERO, L. (1993): Food habits of the Aesculapian snake, *Elaphe longissima*, in Central Italy: do arboreal snakes eat more birds than terrestrial ones?- Journal of Herpetology; Houston; 27: 116-117. SCHÄTTI, B. (1984): Fledermäuse als Nahrung von Schlangen.- Bonner Zoologische Beitrage,Bonn; 35: 335-342. SPARKS, D. W. & ROBERTS, K. J. & JONES, C. (2000): Vertebrate predators on bats in North America north of Mexico; pp. 229-241. In: CHOATE, J. R. (Ed.): Reflections of a naturalist: Papers honoring professor Eugene D. FLEHARTY; Special Issue 1, Fort Hays Studies; Fort Hays State University Press. VEITH, G. (1991): Die Reptilien Bosniens und der Herzegowina. Teil II. - Herpetozoa, Wien; 4 (1/2): 1-96.

KEY WORDS: Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae: *Elaphe longissima, Eptesicus serotinus*, predation, prey, feeding habits, chiropterophagy, Slovakia

SUBMITTED: October 18, 2004

AUTHORS: Peter KAŇUCH & Peter BALÁŽ Institute of Forest Ecology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Štúrova 2, SK-96053 Zvolen, Slovakia < kanuch @sav.savzv.sk > < balaz@sav.savzv.sk >

Predation upon *Amphisbaena fuliginosa* LINNAEUS, 1758 by *Micrurus ancoralis* (JAN, 1872)

Micrurus ancoralis (JAN, 1872), is distributed through the Pacific lowlands from southeastern Panama to southwestern Ecuador and extreme northwestern Peru, between 0 and 1500 m elevation (CAMPBELL & LAMAR 2004). The latter authors are the only reference regarding the diet of *M. ancoralis* in mentioning "small snakes, including *Ninia atrata*" as prey of the Regal Coral Snake. Here I report predation upon *Amphisbaena fuliginosa* LINNAEUS, 1758 by *M. ancoralis*.

A specimen of *M. ancoralis* (deposited at D. F. CISNEROS-HEREDIA's collection at Universidad San Francisco de Quito; Quito, Ecuador: DFCH-USFQ 1111) was collected on the floor of a gap in primary Lowland Evergreen forest at 09:00 at Hacienda El Cielo, a farm on the margins of the Bogotá River (78º44'W, 01º06'S, ca. 300 m a.s.l.), Province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador, by Vlastimil ZAK et al. in October 2000. The snake, an adult female [277 ventrals, 32 subcaudals, 123 cm total length (TL), 114 cm snout-vent length (SVL)], was assigned to the subspecies *M. a. ancoralis* (sensu CAMPBELL & LAMAR 2004). Examination of its stomach contents revealed that the snake had swallowed an adult Speckled Worm Lizard, *Amphisbaena fuliginosa* (DFCH-USFQ 1112) (fig. 1). The worm lizard [8 preanal pores, 200 body annuli, 25 tail annuli, autotomy level of the tail at annulus 5, 46 segments to a midbody annulus, 39 cm TL, 33.5 cm SVL] was assigned to the subspecies *A. f. varia* LAURENTI, 1768 (sensu VANZOLINI 2002). The worm lizard was ingested head first. The prey/predator body length ratio is 0.29, the prey/predator body mass ratio is 0.33, the maximal diameter of

Fig.1: Adult female Regal Coralsnake *Micrurus ancoralis ancoralis* (JAN, 1872) and its prey, a Speckled Worm Lizard *Amphisbaena fuliginosa varia* LAURENTI, 1768; Province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

prey (at head) is 15.2 mm and the minimal diameter of predator (at neck) is 12.6 mm.

Several species of coralsnakes are known to prey upon amphisbaenians: *Micrurus brasiliensis* ROZE, 1967, *M. circinalis* (DUMÉRIL, BIBRON & DUMÉRIL, 1854), *M. filiformis* (GÜNTHER, 1859), *M. frontalis* (DUMÉRIL, BIBRON & DUMÉRIL, 1854), *M. hemprichii* (JAN, 1858), *M. ibiboboca* (MERREM, 1820), *M. lemniscatus* (LINNAEUS, 1758), *M. mipartitus* (DUMÉRIL, BIBRON & DUMERIL, 1854), *M. pyrrhocryptus* (COPE, 1862), *M. serranus* (HARVEY, APARICIO & GONZALEZ, 2003), and *M. tschudii* (JAN, 1858) (CAMPBELL & LAMAR 2004). This is to my knowledge the first record of predation upon an amphisbaenid by *M. ancoralis*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I am grateful to Vlastimil ZAK (Universidad San Francisco de Quito) for collecting the specimen of *M. ancoralis*, to Jean-Marc TOUZET and Ana Maria VELASCO (Universidad San Francisco de Quito / Fundación Herpetologica G. Orcés) for guidance and encouragement, to Daniel PROAÑO, María Olga BORJA, Pablo RIERA and Felipe ARTEAGA (Universidad San Francisco de Quito) for their constant support and help during laboratory work, to Ulrich KUCH (Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt a. M.) for reading the manuscript and providing useful comments, and to María Elena and Laura HEREDIA for financial and moral support. Universidad San Francisco de Quito provided institutional support and laboratory space.

REFERENCES: CAMPBELL, J. A. & LAMAR, W. W. (2004): The venomous reptiles of the western hemisphere; vols. 1+2; Ithaca, New York (Cornell University Press), 870 pp. VANZOLINI, P. E. (2002): A second note on the geographical differentiation of *Amphisbaena fuliginosa* L., 1758 (Squamata, Amphisbaenidae), with a consideration of the forest refuge model of speciation.- Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciencias, Rio de Janeiro; 74 (4): 609-648.

KEY WORDS: Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae: *Micrurus ancoralis ancoralis*; Amphisbaenidae: *Amphisbaena fuliginosa varia*; coralsnake; diet; predation; venomous snakes; Esmeraldas; Ecuador

SUBMITTED: February 2, 2005

AUTHOR: Diego F. CISNEROS-HEREDIA, College of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ave. Interoceánica y calle Diego de Robles, Campus Cumbayá, Edif. Maxwell. Casilla Postal 17-12-841, Quito, Ecuador < diegofrancisco_cisneros@yahoo.com >.

Taxonomic status of *Colostethus parcus* RIVERO, 1991 and *Colostethus exasperatus* DUELLMAN & LYNCH, 1988

In the original description of *Colostethus exasperatus,* DUELLMAN & LYNCH (1988) mentioned the absence of an oblique lateral stripe and the presence of discrete markings on the chest. In his diagnosis of *C. exasperatus*, COLOMA (1995: 29) listed the presence of a short oblique lateral stripe and the absence of discrete marks in the gular-chest region, and in his section on description and variation, he insisted on the absence of spots on the throat: "I am unable to distinguish two discrete marks on the chest as originally stated.". My examination of two paratypes of *C. exasperatus* (Natural History Museum, The Kansas University - KU 147100 and KU 209648) revealed no differences from the original description of DUELLMAN & LYNCH (1988). However, the statements by COLOMA (1995) creates confusion about the recognition of *C. exasperatus*. I suggest that the characters in the original description of *C. exasperatus* (presence of discrete marks on gular-chest region, lack of an oblique lateral line, and the dark throat and chest) be maintained. On the other hand, after examining paratypes of *C. parcus* RIVERO, 1991 (National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution - USNM 282532-34), COLOMA (1995) placed *C. parcus* in the synonymy of *C. exasperatus*. He concluded that the ob-