

brates such as insect larvae, grasshoppers, spiders, scorpions and crickets (SAVAGE 2002), on the other hand it is predated by other snakes, fowl-like birds and some mammals (LANCINI & KORNACKER 1986). *Stenorrhina degenhardtii ocellata* is opisthoglyphous, but usually inoffensive and, according to our experience, cannot be tempted to bite. However, COOK (1984) described a case history of a bite by the neotropical opisthoglyph, *Stenorrhina freminvillei* DUMÉRIL, BIBRON & DUMÉRIL, 1854. This is apparently the first documentation of human envenomation by this genus. Localized pain and swelling were the predominant symptoms; no systemic reaction was noted. Such mild effects are consistent with the bites reported for other New World colubrids, in contrast to the potentially lethal effects produced by Old World colubrid genera *Dipholidus*, *Thelotornis*, *Rhabdophis* and *Atractaspis*.

Most of the specimens under study originated from different locations of the La Costa Range in the North of the country. The occurrence of *S. degenhardtii ocellata* in Táchira state, located in South-West Venezuela, appears to be disjunctive so far.

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KEY WORDS: Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Colubridae, *Stenorrhina degenhardtii ocellata*, pholidosis, morphometry, sexual dimorphism, Venezuela

SUBMITTED: January 09, 2004

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First record of *Coluber smithi* (BOULENGER, 1895) from Tanzania

On 07 October 2002, an adult *Coluber smithi* (BOULENGER, 1895) was collected on a porch of a house at the Merelani Mine (African Gem Resources Ltd. - Tanzania) and subsequently rescued from a person who was in the process of stoning it to death. The individual was approximately 25 cm in length, kept for a day and photographed before been set free in the local vicinity again.

The site is approximately 11 km south of Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), Northern Tanzania (Moshi District), 50 km southeast of Arusha and southwest of Moshi, respectively. The distance to the Kenyan border (straight line) is approximately 90 km (opposite the Amboseli Game Reserve). The area is on the northeastern flank of the Lelatema Mountains on the Massai Steppe at an elevation of 1100 m (UTM 9606284).

This little known diurnal, terrestrial snake is known from the dry savannah and semi-desert, in Kenya at low altitudes (100 - 1300 m). It also occurs in southern and eastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. The southernmost records are from Ukambani and Tsavo National Parks up to Mackinnon Road in Kenya (SPAWLS et al. 2004).

This record indicates an extension in the known range of *C. smithi* southwards into Tanzania from where, as could be determined, this species has not been recorded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Wulf HAACKE (Transvaal Museum, Pretoria) for originally identifying this species from an attached photograph and encouraging further reading on the species.

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KEY WORDS: Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Colubridae; *Coluber smithi*, distribution, Tanzania, new country record

SUBMITTED: November 15, 2004

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Bat as a prey of *Elaphe longissima* (LAURENTI, 1768)

The Aesculapian Snake *Elaphe longissima* (LAURENTI, 1768) is considered to be a generalist as regards the exploitation of available food in its habitat. The literature concerning the foraging ecology of this snake refers to a wide dietary spectrum (also thanks to varying snake body size). Aesculapian Snakes can forage on trees or on the ground. Primarily they feed on small terrestrial mammals (rodents, insectivores), small birds (especially juveniles), bird eggs and amphibians; juveniles take lizards. However, occasionally also fishes or large insects are eaten (BARUŠ & OLIVA 1992; BÖHME 1993; LUISELLI & RUGIERO 1993). Here

we report on the predation of a bat by an Aesculapian Snake.

An adult Aesculapian Snake (body length ca 100 cm) was observed strangling its prey at 11:30 a.m. (CEST) on May 2, 2004 (fig. 1). The prey was an adult male of the Serotine Bat *Eptesicus serotinus* (SCHREBER, 1774). This interesting incident took place on a mown lawn close to a family house in Horná Ždaňa village (48°34' 20"N, 18°44'40"E; 310 m a.s.l.; Žiarska kotlina Basin, Central Slovakia). The strangling was followed from a small distance for a few minutes. After a short time, the snake released the prey and moved away without swallowing the suffocated bat (probably because of disturbance by taking a picture). On May 16, 2004 we visited the locality in the evening. One individual of the Serotine Bat was visually observed (detected by ultrasound bat-detector) during emerging (08:47 p.m. CEST) from the day roost, located in a small wooden roof attic at just three meters directly above the mentioned turf. Based on this finding, we suppose that the bat was caught and taken off from this roost.

Up to present, no specific study dealing with snake predation on bats was performed. Data were often collected in accidental observations. SCHÄTTI (1984) reported in a detailed literature review that chiropterophagy is not uncommon in some snake species. Most of the observations concern giant snakes and larger climbing species (with different hunting strategies) from American, African and Asian continents. Snakes catch bats mainly in caves but also in other types of roosting places where the bats are concentrated in roosting assemblages. Sometimes, bats can present a large portion in a snake's diet. For instance, the Cave-dwelling Nectar Eating Bats *Eonycteris spelaea* (DOBSON, 1871) were an easy accessible prey for giant snakes *Python reticulatus* (SCHNEIDER, 1801) in a cave on the island of Bali (HAENSEL et al. 2001). Similar to our observation, Black Rat Snakes *Elaphe obsoleta* (SAY, 1823) were reported to prey on emerging bats in buildings (SPARKS et al. 2000).

Data about chiropterophagy in snakes from the European region are generally missing. Only a few notes mention bats in



Fig. 1: Male Serotine Bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*) constricted by *Elaphe longissima* (LAURENTI, 1768), Horná Ždaňa (Slovakia). Photo: P. BALÁŽ.

Abb. 1: Männchen der Breitflügelfledermaus (*Eptesicus serotinus*) von *Elaphe longissima* (LAURENTI, 1768) umschlungen. Horná Ždaňa (Slowakei). Photo: P. BALÁŽ.

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Zeitschrift/Journal: [Herpetozoa](#)

Jahr/Year: 2005

Band/Volume: [18_1_2](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Cunningham Peter Low, Cunningham Andrew

Artikel/Article: [First record of Coluber smithi \(BOULENGER, 1895\) from Tanzania 91-92](#)