

Kurze Mitteilungen — Short communications

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House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus domesticus*) as predator of Turkish Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*)

Haussperling (*Passer domesticus domesticus*) erbeutet Europäischen Halbfinger-Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*)

By Francesco Maria Angelici

Key words: *Passer domesticus domesticus*, predation, *Hemidactylus turcicus*, Astipalaia Island (Dodecanese, Greece)

Summary

ANGELICI, F. M. (1993): House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus domesticus*) as predator of Turkish Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*). — Ecol. Birds 15: 119-120.

A case of predation by House Sparrows on Turkish Gecko at Astipalaia Island (Dodecanese, Greece) is reported. The role of sparrows as predators on reptiles is discussed.

Zusammenfassung

ANGELICI, F. M. (1993): Haussperlinge (*Passer domesticus domesticus*) erbeuten Europäischen Halbfinger-Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*). — Ökol. Vögel 15: 119-120.

Am 24. 8. 1990 konnte auf der Insel Astrypalaa (Dodekanes, Griechenland) beobachtet werden, wie drei Haussperlinge einen Europäischen Halbfinger-Gecko erbeuteten. Aufgrund anderer ähnlicher Beobachtungen, wo Sperlinge Mauereidechsen (*Podarcis muralis*) fingen, ist zu vermuten, daß die Fälle von Erbeutung kleiner Reptilien nicht selten sind, vor allem zur Zeit der Jungenaufzucht, in der eine verstärkte Eiweißfütterung tierischer Herkunft benötigt wird.

On 24th August 1990, during an expedition in Astipalaia Island (Dodecanese, Greece), I observed the predation of House Sparrows towards a Turkish Gecko: 3 House Sparrows in a garden near the village of Chora were trying to catch something on a low dry-wall. From a distance of about 8 m, I observed the birds with 8×40 binoculars. The sparrows (2 males, 1 female) were attacking a Turkish Gecko which was still alive. Its length was about 5 cm. Finally, a male sparrow carried the gecko away, which was at that point most probably dead.

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Cyrtodactylus kotschyi was observed in several habitats, while *Hemidactylus turcicus* was observed only in the proximities of human buildings (ANGELICI, CAPULA & RIGA 1990).

This observation is the first reported case of predatory behaviour by House Sparrow towards Gekkonids. Some cases of predation by Italian Sparrow (*Passer domesticus italiae*) towards Lizards (*Podarcis muralis*) have been reported to occur as described here (GALLELLI 1948, MOLTONI 1954, 1962, GIUSTETTI 1980, TRUFFI 1985, MOSTINI 1988).

The phenomenon most probably occurs only during the reproductive season and possibly is not so rare as believed. The House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), the Spanish Sparrow (*P. hispaniolensis*) and the Tree Sparrow (*P. montanus*) are mainly granivorous species whose diets are composed vegetation for 85-90%. Occasionally and especially during reproductive period they feed also on insects and other animals to provide enough protein intake (SUMMERS-SMITH 1988).

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