

Scientific note

A bird as food item of the Jayakar's Sand Boa (*Eryx jayakari* Boulenger, 1888)

(Serpentes, Erycidae)

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The Jayakar's Sand Boa, *Eryx (Pseudogonylophis) jayakari*, is one of the less studied snakes, with a total length of 30–45 cm (Gardner 2013). According to Leviton et al. (1992) this species occurs in the Arabian Peninsula south of Kuwait and in Iran.

About the food consumption of this species in the wild Gasparetti (1988), Egan (2007) and Gardner (2013) say that adults feed on geckos (*Stenodactylus*, *Hemidactylus*, *Bunopus*), members of the Amphisbaenidae and Trogonophidae families and occasionally on rodents.

A more detailed study of the dietary composition of the species was carried out by Al-Sadoon & Al-Otaibi (2014), who determined the stomach content of 70 animals. In their work, these authors found that this snake feeds primarily on lizards (*Acanthodactylus schmidtii*, *Bunopus tuberculatus*, *Stenodactylus slevinii*), which accounted for 50 % of the stomach contents in their test material. Then, larger rodents (*Gerbillus cheesmani*, *G. nanus*) followed with a 25 % share. In addition, arthropods (beetles) were present in 12.5 % of the sample. The remaining 12.5 % of stomach content was completely digestible, but its composition could not be determined. According to the findings of the above mentioned authors, this species is a nocturnal hunter.

In June 2017 two of the authors (Cs.G., J.G.) found an individual of *Eryx jayakari* near Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates. The 42 cm long male regurgitated a male Purple Sunbird (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) that had been consumed not long before. Since this bird species almost never lands on ground, it is assumed that this specimen had landed on the low branches of a bush at night and that is how the boa could capture it.

References

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Fig. 1. The male *Eryx (Pseudogonylophis) jayakari* regurgitated a Purple Sunbird (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) (Photo: Csaba Géczy).

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