



FIG. 1. *Pantherophis guttatus* with ingested *Falco sparverius* (American Kestrel) nestlings, Marion County, Florida.

bird eggs and nestlings, including those of *Colinus virginianus* (Northern Bobwhite) and various songbirds (Ernst and Ernst 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Inst. Press, Washington, D.C. 668 pp.; Miller and Leonard 2010. Southeast. Nat. 9:395–402). Circumstantial evidence suggests that *P. guttatus* might occasionally prey upon eggs or nestlings of larger birds such as cavity-nesting birds of prey. We report here the first documented case of *P. guttatus* preying on *Falco sparverius* (American Kestrel) nestlings in a nest box located ca. 1 km W of Sparr, Marion Co., Florida, USA. Kestrels began incubating a clutch of five eggs on 21 March 2012, and three healthy 5-day-old nestlings and two unhatched eggs were observed on 24 April. When we returned on 14 May to band the 25-day-old nestlings, the nest box contained one unhatched egg and a *P. guttatus* (ca. 1.1 m total length) with three visible lumps from its ingested prey (Fig. 1). Kestrel nestlings typically average 100–105 g as they approach fledging. The nest box was located 4.6 m above ground on a utility pole surrounded by pastures and linear fencerows of oak woodlands.

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PLATYCEPS NAJADUM (Dahl's Whip Snake). MAXIMUM SIZE. *Platyceps najadum* is found throughout the Balkans, Cyprus, the Middle East, and the Caucasus Mountains in dry, xeric habitat from sea level to 2000 m elev. An individual from Bulgaria is the largest known specimen with a maximum total length (TL) of 152 cm (Stojanov et al. 2011. Die Amphibien und Reptilien Bulgariens. Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main. 588 pp.).

Here we present a new maximum body size for *P. najadum* based on a female specimen found on the road in the vicinity of Rustavi, Kvemo Kartli Region, Georgia, near an industrial zone of a nitrogen fertilizer plant (41.536530°N, 45.067462°E; elev. 320 m), 25 September 2012. The specimen was identified by N. Ananjeva and measured 172 cm TL with a tail length of 53 cm.

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POPEIA FUCATA (Thai Peninsula Pit Viper). REPRODUCTION. *Popeia fucata* is known from parts of Myanmar, Thailand, and

Peninsular Malaysia (Das 2010. A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Bali. New Holland Publishers, UK. 376 pp.). *Popeia fucata* (as *Trimeresurus popeiorum*) has litters of 7–12 young (Cox et al. 1998. A Photographic Guide to Snakes and other Reptiles of Thailand and South-east Asia. Asia Books Co., Ltd. Bangkok. 144 pp.). We know of no published information on reproduction of male *P. fucata*. In this note we present information on the minimum size for maturity in male *P. fucata*.

Seven *P. fucata* males were examined (mean SVL = 450.4 mm ± 124.8 SD, range = 242–592 mm) from Peninsular Malaysia collected by LLG during 2002, 2004 to 2006, and 2012 and deposited in the herpetology collection (LSUHC) of La Sierra University, Riverside, California, USA (by state): Kedah, LSUHC 6872, 7565, 7566, 6832; Perak, LSUHC 10664, 10665; Selangor, LSUHC 5098. The lower part of the body cavity was opened and the left testis was removed, embedded in paraffin, histological sections cut at 5 µm and stained by Harris hematoxylin followed by eosin counterstain. Histology slides are deposited in LSUHC.

Two stages were noted in the testicular cycle: 1) regressed, seminiferous tubules are reduced in size, spermatogonia and interspersed Sertoli cells are present; 2) spermiogenesis, seminiferous tubules are lined by sperm or clusters of metamorphosing spermatids. Juvenile males exhibiting regressed testes were LSUHC 242, SVL = 242 mm from July; LSUHC 10664, SVL = 364 mm from July; and LSUHC 7565, SVL = 403 mm from August. Adult males exhibiting spermiogenesis were LSUHC 6872, SVL = 452 mm from September; LSUHC 7566, SVL = 535 mm from August; LSUHC 6832, SVL = 565 mm from September; and LSUHC 5098, SVL = 592 mm from November. Thus, it appears that male *P. fucata* mature at ca. 450 mm SVL.

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PSEUSTES POECILONOTUS (Bird-eating Snake). PREDATION. *Herpotheres cachinnans* (Laughing Falcon) is a relatively common and widespread bird found in woodlands throughout Central and South America and has a diet consisting primarily of snakes (86% of the diet in a well-studied population in Guatemala [Parker et al. 2012. In D. F. Whitacre [ed.], Neotropical Birds of Prey: Biology and Ecology of a Forest Raptor Community, pp. 265–280. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York]). However, to our knowledge, *Pseustes poecilonotus* is not a known diet item (Sazima and Abe 1991. Stud. Neotrop. Fauna Environ. 26:159–169; Laurencio 2005. Herpetol. Rev. 36:188; DuVal et al. 2006. Biotropica 38:566–568; Parker et al., *op. cit.*). On 04 March 2014, at the Organization for Tropical Studies, La Selva Biological Station in northeastern Costa Rica (Heredia Province), we observed an *H. cachinnans* capture and then drop an adult *P. poecilonotus* (total length ca. 1.5 m) along the Sendero Surá trail, within the arboretum. AS initially spotted the falcon attacking the snake; the falcon flew 2 m off the ground with the snake, but dropped it as the snake struggled. RAS and AWJ arrived and observed the bird and snake for an additional 30 min. After dropping the snake, the falcon perched on a horizontal branch at the edge of the arboretum clearing, approximately 10 m above snake. It appeared that the falcon could no longer locate the snake, and after 30 min, the bird flew away without the snake. The snake was still alive after the bird flew, but its left eye was pierced, there were two punctures on the dorsal region of its head, a few

displaced dorsal scales ca. 5 cm from the nuchal region, blood on its broken jaw, and multiple punctures at ca. 1/3 the length of its body. We returned to the site at 1320 h and the snake remained coiled up in the same spot and was marginally responsive. We returned again the following morning at 0800 h and the snake was no longer present.

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SISTRURUS CATENATUS CATENATUS (Eastern Massasauga) AND NERODIA SIPEDON SIPEDON (Northern Watersnake). DIET AND FOREIGN OBJECT. We examined the gut contents of *Sistrurus catenatus catenatus* (N = 13) and *Nerodia sipedon sipedon* (N = 17) found dead on a highway in Magnetawan First Nation, Ontario, Canada between 1 May and 31 August 2013. Necropsies determined that 5/13 (38.5%) *S. c. catenatus* and 3/17 (17.6%) *N. s. sipedon* had prey within their digestive systems. For *S. c. catenatus*, all identifiable prey items were parts of small mammals (fur, paws, and bones; average wet mass = 13.64 g), excluding a single adult *Opheodrys vernalis* (Smooth Greensnake), found in the gut of a juvenile *S. c. catenatus* (body size of both snakes could not be measured due to vehicular damage). Prey items identified from *N. s. sipedon* were both fish (whole, scales, and bones; average wet mass = 9.1 g) and unidentified small mammals (bones, tissue, and fur; average wet mass = 8.4 g). A similar (*S. c. catenatus*) or lower (*N. s. sipedon*) percentage of snakes we collected on a roadway had prey within their digestive tracts when compared to previous field studies that examined gut contents in individuals of these snake species collected from sites not associated with roads (Keenlyne and Beer 1973. *J. Herpetol.* 7:383–384; Shepard et al. 2004. *Am. Midl. Nat.* 152:360–368).

Both the presence of small mammal fur within *N. s. sipedon* and an *O. vernalis* within a juvenile *S. c. catenatus* are noteworthy as although these prey items have been documented previously, they are uncommon (Rowell 2012. *The Snakes of Ontario: Natural History, Distribution, and Status*. Art Bookbindery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. 411 pp.). However, an even more interesting item recovered from the necropsies was a fishhook (4.4 cm long) found within the intestines of a male *S. c. catenatus* (Fig. 1). The fishhook appeared to be a small J-hook with barbed end, typically used for fishing with bait. The fishhook had considerable corrosion, either from exposure to water or as a result of the stomach acid of the snake. The diet of adult *S. c. catenatus* is thought to consist predominately of small mammals; however, fish, crayfish, and amphibians have been documented as prey (Rubio 2010. *Rattlesnakes of the United States and Canada*. ECO Herpetological Publishing & Distribution, Rodeo, New Mexico. 307 pp.; Ernst and Ernst 2011. *Venomous Reptiles of the United States, Canada and Northern Mexico*. John Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 352 pp.). As fish are known prey of this species, the snake may have inadvertently ingested the hook while consuming a living or dead fish previously hooked on a fishing line. Partially digested prey, consisting of mammal hair (wet mass = 10.74 g), was also recovered from the gut of this *S. c. catenatus*. The snake appeared to be in good body condition and the presence of relatively fresh prey in the gut suggests that it was still actively feeding despite having a fishing hook lodged in its intestines. To our knowledge this is the first documented account of a fishhook being recovered from the digestive system of *S. c. catenatus*.



FIG. 1. A small fishhook with barbed end (4.4 cm in length), typically used for fishing with bait, found within the gut of a *Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*.

PHOTO BY P. MOLDOVAN

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SISTRURUS TERGEMINUS EDWARDSII (Desert Massasauga). DIET. Massasaugas feed on a variety of prey, including invertebrates, frogs, lizards, and small mammals (Campbell and Lamar 2004. *Venomous Reptiles of the Western Hemisphere*. Comstock Publishing Associates, Ithaca, New York. 870 pp.), and their diet varies across their large geographic distribution. *Sistrurus catenatus* (Eastern Massasauga) feeds primarily on small mammals, while *S. tergeminus* (Western Massasauga) includes more lizards in the diet (Werler and Dixon 2000. *Snakes of Texas*. University of Texas Press, Austin. 437 pp.; Ernst and Ernst 2003. *Snakes of the United States and Canada*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C. 668 pp.). At ~ 0030 h on 9 August 2014 we found a recently road-killed *S. tergeminus edwardsii* on U.S. Hwy 90, 17.3 km SE of Valentine, in Presidio Co., Texas, USA (30.48109°N, 104.36359°W; datum WGS84). Upon dissection the snake was found to contain two partially digested individuals of *Aspidoscelis inornata* (Trans-Pecos Striped Whiptail). To our knowledge this species is a novel prey item for *S. tergeminus* (Greene and Oliver 1965. *Herpetologica* 21:226–228; Werler and Dixon 2000, *op. cit.*; Ernst and Ernst 2003, *op. cit.*; Campbell and Lamar 2004, *op. cit.*). The snake and lizards were collected and deposited as SRSU 6616.

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