


NOTA CORTA

# Depredación de *Ophiodes fragilis* (Squamata: Anguidae) por *Cariama cristata* (Cariamiformes: Cariamidae)

## Predation of *Ophiodes fragilis* (Squamata: Anguidae) by *Cariama cristata* (Cariamiformes: Cariamidae)

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### ABSTRACT

Reptiles can be on the diet of some bird species, and the glass lizard *Ophiodes fragilis* seems to be no exception. Although predation events are not easily recorded, in this work we document a new record of predation by *C. cristata* upon *O. fragilis*. The event occurred in November 2017 in the municipality of Viçosa, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and helps to fill a gap in trophic relationships between the lizard and its predators.

**Keywords.** Red-legged seriema, Glass lizard, Diet, Prey.

### RESUMEN

Los reptiles pueden estar en la dieta de algunas especies de aves, y el lagarto de cristal *Ophiodes fragilis* parece no ser una excepción. Aunque los eventos de depredación no se registran fácilmente, en este trabajo documentamos un nuevo registro de depredación por *Cariama cristata* sobre *O. fragilis*. El evento ocurrió en noviembre de 2017 en el municipio de Viçosa, estado de Minas Gerais, Brasil, y ayuda a llenar un vacío sobre las relaciones tróficas entre el lagarto y sus depredadores.

**Palabras clave.** Chuña patarreja, Víbora de cristal, Dieta, Presa.

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Predation is one of the most important drivers of changes in biological communities since predators and preys influence the population sizes of adjacent trophic levels and also impact species diversity (Risch and Carroll 1982, Leibold 1996, Millon and Bretagnolle 2008). Therefore, mapping food relationships in communities is crucial to know which species are linked in food webs. Reptiles can be part of the diet of several bird species, and many predation records have been reported (e.g. Zocche et al. 2018, Aguiar et al. 2019). However, for reptiles with cryptic habits, the record of these interactions in nature is scarce. As such, the glass-lizard *Ophiodes fragilis* (Raddi, 1826), a widely distributed secretive reptile (Pizzatto 2005), has reports of predation only by the guira cuckoo *Guira guira* (Gmelin, 1788), the snakes *Clelia plumbea* (Wied-Neuwied, 1820), *Siphlophis pulcher* (Raddi, 1820) and *Paraphimophis rusticus* (Cope, 1878), besides being recorded to be cannibalistic (Duarte and De Sena 2007, Montechiaro and Adams 2009, Gaiarsa et al. 2013, Koski et al. 2017). In this work, we document a new record of predation of *O. fragilis* by the bird *Cariama cristata*.

The predation event occurred in the municipality of Viçosa, Zona da Mata region of the state of Minas Gerais, Bra-

zil. On 26 November 2017 at 16:40 h., in a grassland area (20°45'45" S, 42°52'1" O, 670 m elevation, WGS 84). We observed an adult of *C. cristata* with a specimen of *O. fragilis* on its beak, holding its head (Fig. 1). The lizard was still moving when the bird started to beat it repeatedly against the ground. After our approximation, the bird took flight carrying the dead prey in its beak. The identification of the specimen as *O. fragilis* was made based on external morphology, color, and geographic distribution (Costa et al. 2009).

We saw that the tail of the glass lizard remained intact, despite the genus *Ophiodes* being known for tail autotomy as a defense mechanism (Carreira et al. 2005). The *C. cristata*, on its turn, subdued the prey holding it by the head with its beak, a common behavior for that bird species (Sick 1997). Similarly, the later behavior was already observed in *G. guira* (Aves: Cuculidae) and it was related to the inefficacy of tail autotomy as a defensive mechanism, once the predator did not attack other body parts but the head (Smaniotto et al. 2017). Therefore, tail autotomy may also be inefficient against *C. cristata* because of its behavior of subduing preys by the head. Despite being rare and punctual, such records of predation on natural environ-



**Figure 1.** *Cariama cristata* preying upon *Ophiodes fragilis*, in a grassland area, Viçosa, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

ments allow the observation of defensive and subjugation behaviors, filling a knowledge gap about the natural history of both prey and predator.

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## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

MAPC documented the record, gathered literature and wrote the manuscript. EMAV organized, and helped writing the manuscript. CLA also wrote, revised and improved the manuscript. RNF revised and improved the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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