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Anolis Equestris (Cuban Knight Anole)

Christopher J. Thawley
University of Rhode Island, cthawley@uri.edu

Andrew C. Battles
University of Rhode Island

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Christopher J. Thawley, Andrew C. Battles, Sozos N. Michaelides, and Jason J. Kolbe

ANOLIS EQUESTRIS (Cuban Knight Anole). PREY.

Anolis equestris is native to Cuba and is introduced to Florida, USA (Meshaka et al. 2004. *The Exotic Amphibians and Reptiles of Florida*. Krieger Publ. Co., Malabar, Florida. 166 pp.). This species is considered an opportunistic omnivore and is known to consume fruits, seeds, insects, and small vertebrates (Meshaka et al. 2004, *op. cit.*; Camposano et al. 2008. *Iguana* 15:212-219). *Anolis equestris* is primarily arboreal and diurnal, tending to perch on tree trunks from mid-morning to late afternoon (Meshaka et al. 2004, *op. cit.*). This species has been observed consuming lizards of other exotic species in southern Florida, including those with which it lacks a coevolutionary history, such as *Anolis distichus* (Stroud 2013. *Herpetol. Rev.* 44:661) and *Hemidactylus garnotti* (Meshaka et al. 2004, *op. cit.*).

Hemidactylus mabouia (the Tropical House Gecko or Wood Slave) is native to Africa and is introduced to many locations, including southern Florida, USA (Meshaka et al. 2004, *op. cit.*). *Hemidactylus mabouia* occupies edificarian and arboreal habitats, and is abundant and widely distributed in southern Florida (Krysko and Daniels 2005. *Carib. J. Sci.* 41:28-36). While this species is primarily nocturnal, it is occasionally observed basking during the day (Meshaka et al. 2004, *op. cit.*). An *A. equestris* has been observed with a gecko identified as *H. mabouia* in its mouth (Nicholson and Richards 1999. *Anolis Newsletter* V:95-98). However, consumption was not confirmed, and *Hemidactylus* geckos are difficult to identify without a specimen in hand (Krysko and Daniels 2005., *op. cit.*). Here we report a predation event of *A. equestris* on *H. mabouia*.

On 18 September 2016 at approximately 1100 h, we observed an adult *A. equestris* completely consume a lizard while perched at a height of ~2 m on a gumbo limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) tree in a remnant forest patch at the Montgomery Botanical Center (25.660°N, 80.283°W; WGS84). A brief pursuit of the *A. equestris* induced it to regurgitate its prey item, which we collected and identified as a *H. mabouia* (Krysko and Daniels 2005., *op. cit.*). The body of the *H. mabouia* showed evidence of trauma from multiple bites and was missing a significant portion of its tail, which the Knight Anole presumably retained. To our knowledge, this is the first recorded observation of *A. equestris* preying on *H. mabouia*.

CHRISTOPHER J. THAWLEY (email: cthawley@gmail.com), ANDREW C. BATTLES (email: andrewcbattles@gmail.com), SOZOS N. MICHAELIDES (email: msozos@gmail.com), and JASON J. KOLBE (email: jjkolbe@uri.edu), Department of Biological Sciences, University of Rhode Island, 120 Flagg Rd., Kingston, Rhode Island 02881, USA.