



A Cat-eyed Snake (*Leptodeira* aff. *ornata* 2) Preying on a Wood-colored Salamander (*Bolitoglossa lignicolor*)

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Species of Mushroom-tongued Salamanders (*Bolitoglossa*), the most diverse genus of Neotropical plethodontids (Carvalho Brcko et al. 2013), occupy habitats ranging from semi-fossorial to arboreal (Savage 2002) and are known prey of several species of snakes (*Porthidium godmani*, *Pliocercus elapoides*, *Coniophanes fuscus*, *Rhadinaea lachrymans*, *Rhadinaea hannesteini*, *Rhadinaea hempsteadae*) (Brodie et al. 1991). The uncommonly encountered Wood-colored Salamander (*Bolitoglossa lignicolor*) occurs in humid lowlands and premontane zones in southwestern Costa Rica into adjacent western Panama, the Península de Azuero, and Isla Coiba (Savage 2002; Frost 2021). The cat-eyed snake (*Leptodeira* aff. *ornata* 2) is a “putative undescribed species” from Costa Rica and northern Panama (Costa et al. 2022) that was until recently considered conspecific with the

Northern Cat-eyed Snake (*L. septentrionalis*). Herein we present the first documented observation of a cat-eyed snake preying on a Wood-colored Salamander.

At 2000 h on 2 March 2022 at Rancho Quemado, Costa Rica (8.693769°N, 83.587293°W), we witnessed an adult cat-eyed snake consuming an adult *B. lignicolor*. The snake was hanging vertically on a branch approximately 2 m above the ground, holding the salamander by its head (Fig. 1). Potentially toxic secretions emanating from the salamander (Brodie et al. 1991) were evident around the jaws of the snake but did not dissuade the latter from chewing on the salamander’s head and continuing to ingest it. We photographed the event and observed the process for 15 min from a distance of 4 m in order to not disturb the snake.



Fig. 1. A cat-eyed snake (*Leptodeira* aff. *ornata* 2) feeding on a Wood-colored Salamander (*Bolitoglossa lignicolor*) in Costa Rica. Photographs by Zakariyya Ali.

Opisthoglyphous snakes in the genus *Leptodeira* will chew prey in order to enhance venom delivery (Savage 2002; Solórzano 2004) and are known to feed on treefrogs and their eggs (Arroyo-Trejos and Mora 2016; Platt et al. 2016). Our observation adds a novel predator to the list of those known to take Wood-colored Salamanders.

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