

# Consumption of Bahamian Racers (*Cubophis vudii*) by a Boa (*Epicrates striatus strigulatus*) in Captivity

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From 26 March to 5 June 2010, an adult *Epicrates striatus strigulatus*, a subspecies of the Hispaniolan Boa native to the Bahamas, was held captive at the Island School ([www.islandschool.org/](http://www.islandschool.org/)) at Cape Eleuthera on South Eleuthera, Bahamas. Because finding rodents or other small mammals was difficult, this snake initially (on 29 March) was given and readily consumed small birds (e.g., Common Ground Doves, *Columbina passerina*). Later, small Bahamian Racers (*Cubophis vudii*), as many as three or four at a time, were placed in the cage with a hide-box, and “disappeared.” Subsequently, on 8 April and again on 21 April, the snake was observed eating racers. On one occasion, a smaller *E. striatus* was placed in the cage, and also was consumed.

Hispaniolan Boas are opportunistic feeders (e.g., Henderson and Powell 2009) known to eat frogs, lizards, birds, and mammals (Sheplan and Schwartz 1974; Henderson et al. 1987; Schwartz and Henderson 1991; Franz et al. 1993; Knapp and Owens 2004; Knapp et al. 2004, 2005). Hanlon (1964) reported cannibalism by a female of her brood in captivity.

Boas and racers are unlikely to encounter each other in nature. Boas are nocturnally active, whereas racers are diurnal, limiting possible interactions to crepuscular periods or when an actively foraging boa or an individual establishing an ambush position happens upon a sleeping racer. Nevertheless, consumption of other snakes in nature or captivity has not been previously reported for this species or any West Indian congeners.

## Acknowledgments

I thank the Island School for the opportunity to carry out herpetological research while a student. Luke Sasek contributed to the original study and provided dates included in this note. Thanks also to Alex Henderson who helped care for the snake. Special thanks to Robert Powell and Robert W. Henderson, whose comments on early drafts of this note were quite helpful.

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LUKE SASEK

Like most West Indian boas, *Epicrates striatus strigulatus* feeds almost exclusively on lizards (mostly anoles) when small, and then shifts to endothermic prey as it gets larger.



LUKE SASEK

The same captive *Epicrates striatus strigulatus* eating a Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*).