



First Dietary Record for Camila’s Coralsnake, *Micrurus camilae* (Squamata: Elapidae), Predation on a Caecilian (Gymnophiona: Caeciliidae)

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The Colombian endemic Camila’s Coralsnake, *Micrurus camilae* Renjifo and Lundberg 2003, belongs to the bicolored group (Silva et al. 2016) and occurs in northwestern Colombia from the Urabá region (Antioquia Department) through the adjacent Caribbean versant and into the Middle Magdalena Valley (Santander Department) (Meneses-Pelayo and Caballero 2019; Pelaez and Perlaza 2020). *Micrurus*

camilae inhabits lowland humid and dry tropical forests in addition to anthropogenically altered and fragmented areas (Meneses-Pelayo and Caballero 2019; Pelaez and Perlaza 2020). Due to its fossorial and cryptozoic habits, *M. camilae* is a difficult species to observe (Meneses-Pelayo and Caballero 2019) and it is listed as Data Deficient (DD) on the IUCN Red List (Inex Hladki 2016). Meneses-Pelayo and Caballero



Figure 1. Camila’s Coralsnake (*Micrurus camilae*) ingesting a caecilian (Caeciliidae) in Apartadó, Antioquia, Colombia. Photograph by Carlos Bran-Castrillón.

(2019) and Pelaez and Perlaza (2020) expanded the information on its distribution, habitat and morphological data, and finally Díaz-Flórez et al. (2022) recorded defensive behavior, but, as for most species of coral snakes in Colombia, little is known about this species' natural history.

At approximately 1200 h on 25 November 2021, in the municipality of Apartadó, Antioquia, Colombia (7.872573 -76.621124; elev. 34 m asl), in a peri-urban construction zone, an adult female of *Micrurus camilae* was found feeding on a caecilian (Family Caeciliidae). The snake had ingested about half of the caecilian, but when the workers proceeded to catch them to relocate them to a safer place, the coral snake regurgitated its prey. They were both placed in a bucket; the caecilian was still alive, but barely moving. The snake inspected the caecilian, and then tried to secure it twice without success, biting it on the body and head. Finally, the snake attacked the caecilian again from the head and proceeded to ingest it (Fig. 1). The complete head-first ingestion took about eight minutes. Neither animal was collected, but the event was documented with photographs. Unfortunately, the caecilian could only be identified to family. The snake was released later that day.

Coral snakes prey primarily on smaller snakes, but will also eat small lizards and amphisbaenians. However, particular species or populations have more specialized feeding habits and might prey on caecilians, swamp eels, other fish, or even onychophorans and other invertebrates (Campbell and Lamar 2004). Despite this, little effort has been made to study the diets of coral snakes (Roze 1996) and the feeding habits of tropical coral snakes are poorly known (Campbell and Lamar 2004). Herein we report the first record of predation by *Micrurus camilae* on a caecilian, which also is the first dietary record for the species.

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