

to northeastern Argentina, including Uruguay and southeastern Paraguay. *Scinax aromothyella* occurs in northeast Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil. Herein, we report the occurrence of a morbid embrace at a permanent pond in the Municipality of Vacaria, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on 22 June 2006, at 2140 h. An adult male *S. squalirostris* was found being preyed upon by a spider. When disturbed, the spider released the dead treefrog that fell to the ground. However, a few moments later another male *S. squalirostris* vocalizing in the area immediately amplexed the corpse. On the same night, in the same pond, other cases of morbid embrace were observed among *S. aromothyella* individuals. Five males were found embracing other recently-dead conspecifics (possibly accidentally killed by researchers trampling). At least two of all corpses found were males. The collected individuals were deposited in the herpetological collection of Departamento de Zoologia, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS 5675, 5678). These observations occurred on the first rainy night after a long dry spell in that area. We suspect that the animals were under intense reproductive pressure and, due to the desperate attempt at mating, they invested in dead partners and/or those of the same gender.

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**SCUTIGER BOULENGERI (Xizang Alpine Toad). NESTING.**

While the development of *S. boulengeri* larvae has been previously reported (Song and Huang 1990. Acta Zootaxonomica Sinica 187–193), their nesting behavior is not yet described. From 9–30 June 2012, we observed more than 30 nests across the Qinghai Province of China. Gelatinous eggs were attached as a circular or globular mass to the bottoms of stones in small streams, along the edges of larger streams, and in ephemeral pools (Figs. 1, 2). One average-sized nest was counted and found to contain 323 eggs; some rocks contained multiple nests. Almost all nests were guarded by males, and of the few without male attendance, most appeared to be in various states of decay. Only one female was found underneath a stone with a nest, but a male was also present with the recently laid eggs. In areas where nests occurred, observed males—both with and without nests—outnumbered



FIG. 1. Overturned *Scutigera boulengeri* nest, guarded by a male, in Qinghai, China.

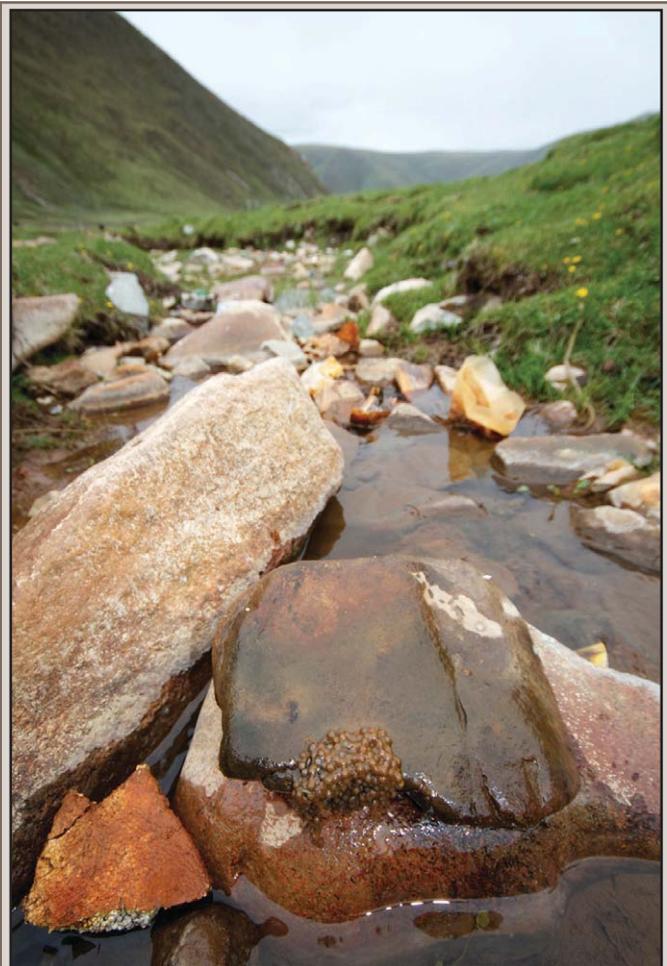


FIG. 2. Overturned *Scutigera boulengeri* nest (lower middle) in Qinghai, China.

females more than twenty to one. These observations are consistent with the nest site selection, clutch size, and paternal guarding of nests described for another member of Megophryidae, *Leptobranchium boringii* (Zheng et al. 2011. Asian Herpetol. Res. 2[4]:199–215).

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**XENOPHRYS BRACHYKOLOS (Short-legged Toad). DIET.**

*Xenophrys brachykolos* is endemic to Hong Kong with a SVL to 6 cm (Karsen et al. 1998. Hong Kong Amphibians and Reptiles. Provisional Urban Council, Hong Kong. 186 pp.). Although the natural diet of this species is unknown, it has been reported to feed on earthworms, crickets, and termites in captivity (Karsen et al. 1998, *op. cit.*). At 2000 h on 15 October 2011, in Pokfulam Country Park (22.268°N, 114.141°E, WGS84; elev. 250 m), Hong Kong, we observed an adult, gravid female *X. brachykolos* (5 cm SVL) sitting on a rock in a stream with a partly ingested earthworm (total length = 26 cm) in its mouth (Fig. 1). The earthworm was still alive and slowly wriggled out of the frog's stomach and eventually escaped. The earthworm appeared to be at least double the body size of the frog by volume and it seemed impractical for the frog to accommodate the whole worm in the stomach



FIG. 1. Adult female *Xenophrys brachykolos* feeding on an earthworm much larger than its size in Hong Kong. The earthworm was still alive and slowly wriggled out of the frog's stomach and eventually escaped.

even if the earthworm was dead. To our knowledge, this is the first record of such unusual feeding behavior of this species.

Foraging of frogs is stimulated entirely by prey movement (Lettvin et al. 1959. Proc. IRE 47[11]:1940–1955), and frogs will attempt to ingest any prey that fits within its gape width limit. Without the ability to masticate, frogs are sometimes prone to mistakenly tackle prey larger than they can handle. The theory of optimal feeding strategy suggests that prey size selection is governed by the balance between the cost of handling and the benefit of eating the prey (Schoener 1966. Annu. Rev. Ecol. Syst. 2:369–404); therefore predators should not attempt to consume large prey if handling proves too costly, even if they can physically ingest it. Frogs are possibly one of the few taxa that defy this theory. Feeding behavior of this sort, although rarely reported, may occur more often than expected.

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#### TESTUDINES — TURTLES

**CHELONOIDIS CHILENSIS (Argentine Tortoise). ECTOPARASITE.** *Chelonoidis chilensis* ranges from southwestern Bolivia and western Paraguay south to northwestern Argentina (Bonin et al. 2006. Turtles of the World. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 416 pp.). It is listed as a vulnerable species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.iucnredlist.org>. Accessed 10 December 2012). Herein, we report a new host record for a tick found on *C. chilensis*.

A hatchling *C. chilensis* (voucher retained by the Museo de Historia Natural, Asunción, Paraguay) was collected by PSF in February 1996, 15.6 km S of Filadelfia and 37.7 km NW on the Ruta Transchaco (Dr. Carlos Antonio López) Highway, Boquerón District, Paraguay (22.3475°S, 60.2545°W; datum WGS84). It was infested with a single tick, which was placed in a vial containing 70% ethanol and sent to CTM. It was later forwarded to LAD for processing and identified as a female *Amblyomma dissimile* Koch, 1844. The specimen is deposited in the U.S. National Tick Collection, Statesboro, Georgia, under accession number RML 122343.

Although *A. dissimile* has been reported previously from amphibians and reptiles in Paraguay (Nava et al. 2007. Ann. Trop. Med. Parasitol. 101:255–270) this is the first time, to our knowledge, that it has been reported from *C. chilensis*. This tick is a common ectoparasite of various Neotropical reptiles and/or amphibians in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America (Guglielmone et al. 2003. Ticks [Acari: Ixodida] of the Neotropical Zoogeographic Region. International Consortium on Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, Atalanta, Houten, Netherlands. 173 pp.; Voltzit 2007. Acarina 15:3–134). It also occurs in Florida (Keirans and Durden 1998. J. Med. Entomol. 35:489–495).

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#### **CHRYSEMYS PICTA MARGINATA (Midland Painted Turtle).**

**AVIAN PREDATION.** While conducting road-cruising surveys and systematic transect surveys to estimate reptile abundance from 1 May 2012 to 31 August 2012 on the Magnetawan First Nation, Ontario, Canada, we observed a high number of reptile road mortality events and predation on *Chrysemys picta marginata* by birds (Common Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)). The road mortality data are being used for another study; here we report the details of the avian predation events.

A total of 10 successful avian predation events on Painted Turtles (6 females, 2 males, 2 sex unknown) occurred between 27 May 2012 and 11 June 2012. These dates correspond with Painted Turtle nesting season at our site, and the time when males are moving among marshes in search of mates (pers. obs.; Ernst and Lovich 2009. Turtles of the United States and Canada, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., John Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 827 pp). An unsuccessful predation event occurred on 5 June 2012, when researchers chased a murder of American Crows off an adult female Painted Turtle who was flipped onto her carapace on the roadside. As they approached, the researchers noted a bird pecking at the legs of the turtle. The turtle was not injured, thus, it is presumed that the researchers interrupted the predation event.

All of the 10 bodies collected from the successful predation events indicated a consistent method used by the *Corvus* spp. to predate the turtles. Typically, the turtle would be found flipped onto its carapace, and had an open wound in the inguinal space of the hind limbs (Fig. 1). This opening would allow the birds' access to both entrails and eggs within gravid females. We found that the predation event did not immediately kill the turtle, but rather the turtle remained alive for 2–6 h post-predation (timing estimated based on durations between surveys). We found that over half of the individuals with internal organs missing still retained muscular function in their jaws and eyelids; it has been reported that brain function in freshwater turtles can persist for upwards of three hours after blood flow stops (Milton 2008. In Proceedings of the Turtle Stewardship and Management Workshop. Toronto Zoo, Toronto, Ontario. 17 pp). Turtles that were found predated but alive were euthanized to prevent further suffering.

As a result of the high intelligence and socialized problem-solving behaviors of *Corvus* spp. (Seed et al. 2008. Proc. Royal Soc. B, 275:1421–1429), and the uncommon occurrence of this method of predation, we suspect that this is a learned behavior