

reportedly consume Hawksbill Sea Turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in the West Indies (Randall 1967. Studies Trop. Ocean., Univ. Miami No. 5:665–847) and Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Hawaii (Balazs 1984. Univ. Hawaii Sea Grant Misc. Rep. 84-01(Vol. II), 321 pp.), the Kingdom of Tonga (Witzell 1981. Bull. Mar. Sci. 31:935–936), and the Great Barrier Reef in Australia (Gyuris 1994. Coral Reefs 13:137–144). However, studies of grouper species of the Florida Gulf coast have not yet reported sea turtles in the diet (Bullock and Smith 1991. Mem. Hourglass Cruises, Vol. 8, Pt. 2, 243 pp.) and studies of predators of Florida Atlantic coastal Loggerhead Sea Turtle hatchlings do not record this grouper species (Whelan and Wyneken 2007. Copeia 2007:745–754).

Both *E. itajara* and *C. caretta* receive protection from state and federal agencies within the United States. Recent assessments for *E. itajara* have suggested that the Gulf of Mexico populations may be recovering. This predatory event raises a question as to whether recovery of one protected species might be impacting the recovery of its prey, also a protected species, since top-down trophic cascades can occur in marine ecosystems. The observation also suggests that *E. itajara* in Florida waters are, at the very least, opportunistic consumers of juvenile sea turtles.

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Submitted by **BEAU. G. YEISER, JACK J. MORRIS,** and **ANTON D. TUCKER,** Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, Florida 34236, USA (e-mail: byeiser@gmail.com).

GOPHERUS POLYPHEMUS (Gopher Tortoise). **COYOTE PREDATION.** Hatchling and juvenile *Gopherus polyphemus* are known to have many predators, including mesomammalian, ophidian, raptor, and invertebrate species (see Epperson and Heise 2003. J. Herpetol. 37:315–324, and references therein). However, known published accounts of predation on adult *G. polyphemus* are limited to Dog (*Canis familiaris*) attacks (Douglass and Winegarner 1977. J. Herpetol. 11:236–238; Causey and Cude 1978. Herpetol. Rev. 9:94–95). Here I report an incidence of a Coyote (*C. latrans*) depredating an adult *G. polyphemus*.

On 15 June 2007 at 1225 h, I arrived at artillery firing point 136 on the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Perry County, Mississippi, USA to search for Gopher Tortoise nests. Upon exiting the vehicle, I heard crunching noises coming from the edge of the field, and approached slowly to investigate. When I got within ca. 30 m of the disturbance, I scared off an adult *C. latrans* that had been eviscerating an adult female *G. polyphemus*. The Coyote had ripped open a large hole in the plastron, and had removed the tail and most of the intestines (Fig. 1). The head, limbs, and carapace were all intact, and the damage was presumably done immediately prior to my arrival, since I could see the tortoise's heart still beating. The tortoise died 10 minutes later. I examined all nearby burrows, and did not find any signs of excavation, nor did I find signs of attempted or interrupted oviposition; therefore I assumed that this tortoise had been attacked while out of its burrow. This supports observations by R. E. Ashton (unpubl. data, in Mushinsky et al. 2006. In P. A. Meylan [ed.], Biology and Conservation of Florida Turtles, pp. 350–375. Chelonian Research Monographs No. 3) that Coyotes will wait



FIG. 1. Remains of an adult female *Gopherus polyphemus*, eviscerated by a coyote (*Canis latrans*) at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Perry County, Mississippi.

until a Gopher Tortoise leaves its burrow before attacking it. This particular tortoise had been measured the previous summer, and at 283 mm carapace length and a weight of 4.4 kg, it exceeded the averages for adult female *G. polyphemus* at Camp Shelby (ca. 267 mm carapace length and 3.8 kg; N = 281).

Coyotes have been expanding their range across the southeast for decades, partially due to releases by man and extirpation of native predators (Hill et al. 1987. Wildl. Soc. Bull. 15:521–524; Lovell et al. 1998. Wildl. Soc. Bull. 26[3]:552–556). An analysis of annual predator harvest data in Mississippi (Lovell et al., *op. cit.*) found that the numbers of Coyotes increased 7.5-fold from 1980 to 1995 (unlike Bobcat, Red Fox, and Grey Fox numbers, which remained relatively unchanged during that same period). The increased numbers of Coyotes in the area represent a relatively new predation pressure for *G. polyphemus*, adding to the growing list of threats (including habitat conversion and fire exclusion) already facing this federally-protected species.

Submitted by **MATTHEW G. HINDERLITER,** Camp Shelby Field Office, The Nature Conservancy, CSJFTC-ENV Building 622, Camp Shelby, Mississippi 39407, USA; e-mail: mhinderliter@tnc.org.

HYDROMEDUSA MAXIMILIANI (Brazilian Snake-necked Turtle). **HATCHLING SIZE AND BODY MASS.** The chelid turtle *Hydromedusa maximiliani* is endemic to eastern and southeastern Brazil (Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo states) and in parts of southern Bahia, and is associated with mountainous regions (Souza 2004. Reptilia 53:51–55). On 30 May 2005 at 1100 h we hand-captured, measured, and released one post-hatchling juvenile *H. maximiliani* in Reserva Biológica Municipal Santa Cândida (21.6888889°S, 43.3444444°W; 770 m elev.), Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais state, Brazil. The carapace length (CL) of this juvenile was 43 mm, plastron length (PL) was 28.5 mm, and the body mass was 7.8 g. Guix et al. (1992. Bol. Assoc. Herpetol. Esp. 3:23–25) reported the minimum CL of one (presumably post-hatchling) specimen as 40 mm, but did not provide data on body mass. The minimum body mass for a juvenile *H. maximiliani* previously reported was

15 g (Souza. 1995. *Herpetol. Rev.* 26:34), though the CL of this specimen was 47.3 mm. The specimen here reported, probably a recent post-hatchling, represents a new record for minimum body mass and plastron length for a juvenile *H. maximiliani*.

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Submitted by **IARA ALVES NOVELLI** (e-mail: iaranovelli27@gmail.com), and **BERNADETE MARIA DE SOUSA** (e-mail: bernadete.sousa@ufjf.edu.br), Laboratório de Herpetologia, Departamento de Zoologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Campus Universitário, Bairro Martelos, Juiz de Fora, MG, Brazil, 36036-330.

HYDROMEDUSA MAXIMILIANI (Brazilian Snake-necked Turtle). **DIET.** Adult *Hydromedusa maximiliani* are primarily carnivorous, feeding on aquatic invertebrates, including insect larvae and crustaceans (Souza 2004. *Reptilia* 53:51–55; Souza and Abe 1995. *Chelon. Conserv. Biol.* 1:320–322; Souza and Abe 1998. *J. Herpetol.* 32:106–112). This diet is complemented by terrestrial invertebrates that fall into the water, anurans, and carrion (Souza 2004, *op. cit.*). Here we report on *H. maximiliani* feeding on *Trichodactylus fluviatilis*, a freshwater decapod native to South America.

We gathered data on the feeding habits of *H. maximiliani* from October 2004 to May 2005, in the Reserva Biológica Municipal Santa Cândida (21.6888889°S, 43.3444444°W; 770 m elev.), Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais state, Brazil. The stomach contents of 10 specimens of *H. maximiliani* were sampled by flushing (Legler 1977. *Herpetologica* 33:281–284). The decapod was identified in accordance with Magalhães (2003. *In* Melo [ed.], *Manual de Identificação dos Crustáceos Decápodos de Água Doce do Brasil*, pp. 143–287. São Paulo, Edições Loyola). Six samples of stomach contents revealed parts of the carapace, pereopod, and cheliped of *T. fluviatilis*. Freshwater decapods previously reported as prey of *H. maximiliani* are *Aegla odebrechi*, *A. paulensis*, and *Hyalella pernix* (Yashimita 1990. *Herpetol. Rev.* 21:19; Souza and Abe 1995, *op. cit.*; Souza and Abe 1998, *op. cit.*; Souza and Abe 1997. *Bol. Asoc. Herpetol. Esp.* 8:17–20). This is the first report of *T. fluviatilis* being consumed by *H. maximiliani*.

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Submitted by **IARA ALVES NOVELLI** (e-mail: iaranovelli27@gmail.com), **BERNADETE MARIA DE SOUSA** (e-mail: bernadete.sousa@ufjf.edu.br), **SAMUEL CAMPOS GOMIDES**, **ALINE DE OLIVEIRA SANTOS**, and **SÔNIA SIN SINGER BRUGIOLO**, Laboratório de Herpetologia,

Departamento de Zoologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Campus Universitário, Martelos, Juiz de Fora, MG, Brazil, 36036-900.

KINOSTERNON SONORIENSE (Sonoran Mud Turtle). **DIET.** *Kinosternon sonoriense* is generally considered a carnivore, but occasionally consumes plant material when benthic fauna are limited (Hulse 1974. *J. Herpetol.* 8:195–199). Over the last decade, we have documented several observations of Sonoran Mud Turtles feeding on vertebrates in ephemeral canyon pools in the Peloncillo Mountains, Hidalgo Co., New Mexico (Ligon and Stone 2003. *Herpetol. Rev.* 34:241–242; Stone et al. 2005. *Herpetol. Rev.* 36:312). Here, we add the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) to the list of vertebrate species *K. sonoriense* has consumed in this setting. On 17 July 2007, ca. 1200 h, we approached an isolated canyon pool (ca. 20 cm in depth and 1.5 m² in area) and observed a dead House Finch floating near the edge. Just before we began to search the pool, we noticed the dead bird gently rippling on the surface. We examined the bird and noted its breast and belly were missing and much of the sides and flanks had been picked clean of meat, with only the head, wings, and legs remaining intact. A female *K. sonoriense* (MCL = 100.8 mm) was found on the bottom of the pool directly underneath the bird. After identifying and measuring the turtle, we placed the turtle and bird back into the pool and then quietly waited and observed. After a few minutes the bird again began to gently ripple, presumably due to the turtle feeding on the carcass.

Stone et al. (2005, *op. cit.*) reported a similar observation involving a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*), and Ligon and Stone (2003, *op. cit.*) reported two instances of Sonoran Mud Turtles feeding on toads (*Bufo punctatus*). These are the only birds and only anurans we have found dead in canyon pools during a long-term field study (Stone 2001. *Southwest. Nat.* 46:41–53). Stone et al. (2005, *op. cit.*) also observed a Sonoran Mud Turtle kill and eat a garter snake (*Thamnophis cyrtopsis*). Although observations involving birds and anurans could represent instances of scavenging, the accumulated observations suggest that *K. sonoriense* opportunistically preys on vertebrates in canyon pools. Regardless, it is clear that canyon pools provide unique feeding opportunities for Sonoran Mud Turtles, and that vertebrates likely comprise a more significant portion of this species' diet than previously reported.

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Submitted by **BRIAN D. STANILA**, **KENNETH J. LOCEY**, and **PAUL A. STONE**, Department of Biology, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73034, USA (e-mail: bstanila@ucok.edu).

CROCODYLIA — CROCODILIANS

CAIMAN CROCODILUS (Spectacled Caiman). **OPPORTUNISTIC FORAGING.** We document opportunistic foraging behavior by *Caiman crocodilus* in a post-inundation