

Regurgitating *Micrurus corallinus* (Serpentes, Elapidae) reveals another record for the rare caecilian *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* (Gymnophiona, Typhlonectidae)

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Micrurus corallinus (Merrem, 1820) is a diurnal, fossorial and medium-sized elapid (SVL 213 mm to 950 mm) (Marques et al., 2001, Pontes & Rocha, 2008, Silva-Jr et al., 2016). It can be identified by the tricolored monad pattern (Campbell & Lamar, 2004, Silva-Jr et al., 2016) and is quite common in its area of occurrence (Marques et al., 2001, Argôlo, 2004, Pontes & Rocha, 2008). This snake can be found in parts of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In Brazil, it occurs in the Atlantic Forest in the Southern and Southeastern states, and in forest fragments of the Northeast States (Roze, 1967, Silva & Nunes, 1996, Freire, 2001, Argôlo, 2004, Campbell & Lamar, 2004, Wallach et al., 2014, Silva-Jr et al., 2016). Similar to other congeneric species, the diet of *Micrurus corallinus* is composed by elongated prey (Roze, 1983; Marques & Sazima, 1997; Silva-Jr et al., 2016; Silva-Soares & Castro, 2016; Banci et al., 2017).

Chthonerpeton aff. *braestrupi* is a Gymnophiona which belongs to the Family Typhlonectidae. This species is currently under the description process and so far had only been recorded for the region of Paracambi (State of Rio de Janeiro, Southeastern Brazil) (Rocha et al., 2004). In general, Gymnophiona are poorly known due to their secretive habit and difficulty in collecting, so information about natural history, taxonomy and even areas of occurrence are scarce in the literature (Nussbaum et al., 1987; Silva et al., 2003). Beside this,

Chthonerpeton species are believed to have cryptozoic, fossorial and semi-aquatic habits (Nussbaum et al., 1987; Napoli et al., 2015).

Here, we report a case of predation of *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* by *Micrurus corallinus* as well as a new occurrence site for the Amphibian for the State of Rio de Janeiro, Southeastern Brazil. On December 13, 2016, at 8:30 p.m. at the “Parque Arqueológico e Ambiental de São João Marcos” Municipality of Rio Claro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (-22.8002° S, -44.0289° W; 439 m a.s.l.; WGS 84). We collected a night-active specimen of *Micrurus corallinus* (MNRJ 26777, male, SVL = 310 mm, TL = 46 mm). During the photograph section, this snake regurgitated a specimen of *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* (MNRJ 91958, undetermined sex, Total length = 190 mm) (Figure 1). The specimen had been ingested head-first, so its anterior part was partially digested. However, identification was possible by the presence and number of *annuli* and the coloration pattern with a dark back and clear womb (see Nussbaum et al. 1987).

Marques & Sazima (1997) studied the natural history of *Micrurus corallinus* and found as diet



Figure 1. *Micrurus corallinus* (MNRJ 26777), at the time of regurgitating a specimen of *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* (MNRJ 91958).

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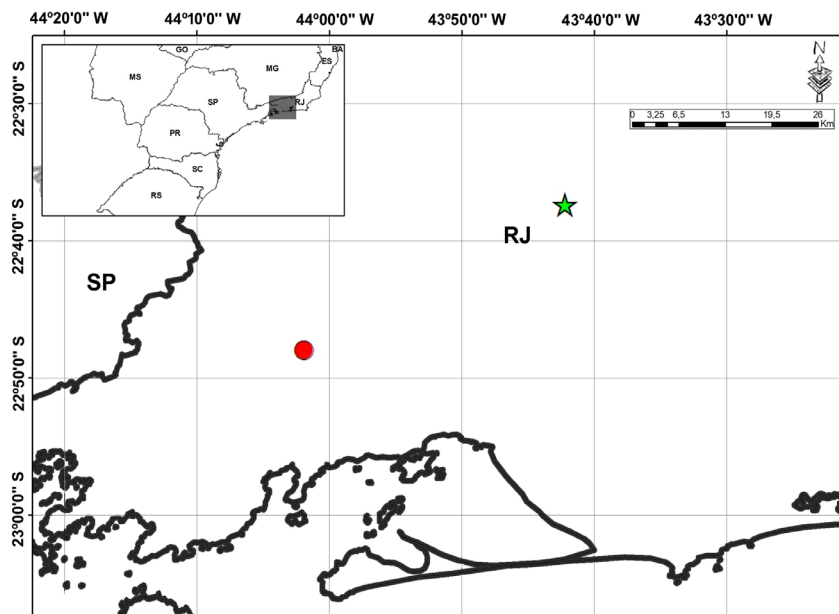


Figure 2. Current known records of *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* in Rio de Janeiro State, Southeastern Brazil. Red dot: present study; Green star: literature record (Rocha et al., 2004).

components: snakes, Gymnophiona, elongated lizards, and amphisbaenids, being *Leposternon microcephalum* the most common item. Out of the total number of specimens examined by Marques & Sazima (1997) ($n = 512$, of which 90 were identifiable), only about 10% contained Gymnophiona, or traces of them in their digestive tracts. Although Gymnophiona are often mentioned as part of the diet of *Micrurus corallinus* (Marques & Sazima, 1997, Marques et al. 2001, Pontes & Rocha, 2008, Banci et al., 2017), identification to the species level are rare (e.g., Kleinteich et al. 2008). Here, the record of *Chthonerpeton* aff. *braestrupi* represents not only a new prey item for *M. corallinus*, but also another record for the caecilian for the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Figure 2).

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