

# Predation of *Ameivula nativo* (Squamata: Teiidae) by *Gampsonyx swainsonii* (Accipitriformes: Accipitridae) in Espírito Santo, Brazil

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*Ameivula nativo* (Rocha, Bergallo & Peccinini-Seale, 1997) is a unisexual lizard species endemic to restinga habitats (coastal sand dunes) in Espírito Santo and Bahia states, eastern Brazilian coast (Menezes and Rocha, 2013). It was recently included in the Brazilian red list of threatened species as "Endangered", due to its habitat specificity and estimated loss of 50% of its area of occupancy, with possible extinction of some subpopulations (ICMBio, 2014; MMA, 2014). *Ameivula nativo* is also considered as "Vulnerable" in the state of Espírito Santo (Espírito Santo, 2005).

Natural history information on *Ameivula nativo* is restricted to three populations: its type-locality (Linhares, state of Espírito Santo) (Bergallo and Rocha 1993 [as *Cnemidophorus ocellifer*]); Parque Estadual Paulo César Vinha (Guarapari, Espírito Santo) (Peloso and Pavan, 2007; Peloso *et al.*, 2008); and Prado, state of Bahia (Menezes *et al.*, 2004a, b, 2008). So far, only the lizard *Tropidurus torquatus* and the snake *Philodryas patagoniensis* were recorded as predators of *A. nativo* (Peloso and Pavan, 2007). Here we record the predation of *A. nativo* by a third species, *Gampsonyx swainsonii* (Aves: Accipitriformes: Accipitridae).

The Pearl kite (*G. swainsonii*) is a monotypic kite species occurring from Nicaragua to Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil (Ferguson-Lees and Christie, 2001). Its habitats include a variety of vegetation types, from gallery forests to savannas, and natural clearings (Sick, 1997; Ferguson-Lees and Christie, 2001). The diet of Pearl kites consists of insects, small lizards, mammals and birds (Oniki, 1995; Sick, 1997; Ferguson-Lees and Christie, 2001).

The predation event was observed during an avifaunal survey at Parque Estadual Paulo César Vinha (PEPCV), a large undisturbed restinga in Guarapari, state of Espírito Santo, southeastern of Brazil (20°35' S; 40°24' W; near sea level). On 26 March 2015, 11h15, GSO was observing a Pearl kite (*G. swainsonii*) perched on a tree when suddenly the bird flew to the ground. Afterwards, the kite flew to an electric cable with a specimen of *A. nativo* in its beak (Figure 1). The lizard was eviscerated and partially eaten by the bird. About three minutes after, the kite flew away carrying the lizard in its claws.

The lizard could be identified as an individual of *A. nativo* because of its overall teiid morphology and its color pattern of olive and black with thin light stripes (Rocha *et al.*, 1997). Besides, *A. nativo* is the only species of *Ameivula* occurring in the coast of Espírito Santo (Menezes and Rocha, 2013).

Predation events concerning species of *Ameivula* (formerly part of *Cnemidophorus* [Harvey *et al.* 2012]) are largely based on *A. ocellifera*. This can be explained by *A. ocellifera* being the most widespread species of the genus and that most species of *Ameivula* were described in the last few years (Costa and Bérnills, 2014). Known predators of *Ameivula* are mostly snakes, but also birds, invertebrates, and lizards, including conspecifics (e.g., Vitt and Vangilder, 1983; Michaud and Dixon, 1989;



**Figure 1:** A Pearl Kite (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*), holding a lizard *Ameivula nativo* it captured in the restinga of Parque Estadual Paulo César Vinha, municipality of Guarapari, state of Espírito Santo, southeastern Brazilian coast. Photo: GSO.

Lira-da-Silva, 2009; Gogliath *et al.*, 2010; Sales *et al.*, 2010; Mesquita *et al.*, 2013; Gaiarsa *et al.*, 2013). Besides reporting for the first time a bird as predator of *A. native*, our observation adds *Gampsonyx swainsonii* as a predator of the genus *Ameivula*.

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*Epictia* sp., Gaúcha do Norte. Foto: Reuber Brandão.