

snakes: Their Habits, Life Histories, and Influence on Mankind. 2nd ed. Univ. California Press, Berkeley, California. 1533 pp.) reported a field mouse and *Sceloporus jarrovi jarrovi* as prey items of *Crotalus pricei pricei*. Armstrong and Murphy (1979. The Natural History of Mexican Rattlesnakes. Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist. Special Publ. 5:1–88) found a juvenile *Sceloporus poinsettii* in an adult *C. p. pricei*. Little published data exist on the natural history of the endemic Mexican subspecies *C. p. miquihuanus* and no prey items have been recorded for this subspecies. Armstrong and Murphy (*op. cit.*) stated that lizards of the genus *Sceloporus* appear to be the main prey of *C. p. miquihuanus*.

On 29 May 2001 we collected an adult male *C. p. miquihuanus* near Santa Rita, Municipio Arteaga, Coahuila, México, in thick agave (*Agave* spp.) and scrub oak (*Quercus* sp.) among exposed limestone. The specimen had a noticeable mid-body bulge. Seven days later the specimen defecated. Analysis of the fecal matter revealed scales and a partially digested front leg of a *Barisia imbricata ciliaris*. Several specimens of this anguid were found in the same general area as the specimen of *C. p. miquihuanus*.

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**ELAPHE O. OBSOLETA** (Black Ratsnake) **ESCAPE BEHAVIOR, HABITAT.** *Elaphe o. obsoleta* is a terrestrial species with arboreal foraging tendencies (Fitch 1999. A Kansas Snake Community: Composition and Changes Over 50 Years. Krieger Publishing, Malabar, Florida. xi + 165 pp.). Weatherhead and Hoysak (1989. Can. J. Zool. 67:463–468) indicated that in June, males are often wide-ranging and are found in open areas, and Stickel et al. (Amer. Midl. Nat. 103:1–14) reported that individual snakes included a mixture of habitats within their ranges. None of these studies mentioned aquatic behavior in this species.

On 27 May 2002 at 1630 h, while seeking *Nerodia sipedon* in the "400 ponds" enclosure of the Nelson Environmental Study Area [University of Kansas Field Station and Ecological Reserves (KSR)], pond 437 (NE1/4, Section 33, TWP11S RNG20E, Jefferson County, Kansas), I observed a ca 1 m TL *E. o. obsoleta* swimming diagonally across the 20.6 m x 20.6 m pond. The 6.7-ha site of these ponds is not far from wooded habitat and is surrounded by open areas; the enclosure containing these ponds is not wooded and is mowed regularly. The snake's head was elevated ca. 50 mm above the water surface. It swam directly to a small, emergent willow (*Salix* sp.) directly in front of my observation point and ca 2.5 m from shore, climbed into the lowermost branches, and remained still while stretched out on a thin, horizontal branch. The snake seemed unaware of a small bird nest (species unknown) of apparently recent construction, and also was unaware of me. Air temperature was 27°C, no cloud cover, no breeze.

After 15 minutes of observation, I attempted capture of the snake. As the pond bank dropped steeply away and the snake was just beyond effective reach of my tongs, I tossed a twig just beyond it

in the hope that it would swim to shore not far from my vantage point. Instead, it dropped into the water, dove, and from the resultant bubble trail from disturbed vegetation swam ca 10 m into the pond, then turned towards the adjacent bank where I saw it emerge. I subsequently lost track of it in vegetation.

Fitch (pers. comm.) indicated that never in 50+ years of observing this species in the area had he seen one utilize an aquatic habitat in this fashion. Of the many specimens I have observed in the area since 1970, none has been in an aquatic habitat. However, Fitch (Copeia 1963:649–658) noted that on the University of Kansas Fitch Natural History Reservation the species is "present in all habitats," and also presented tentative evidence that some individuals include frogs in their diet.

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**ELAPHE OBSOLETA QUADRIVITTATA** (Yellow Ratsnake). **ATTEMPTED PREDATION.** During mid-morning on 24 March 2000, we observed a red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) attack an *Elaphe obsoleta quadrivittata* in Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Immokalee, Florida, USA. The hawk landed on a horizontal branch of a large cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) tree near the top of the canopy (~15 m) in a primary stand of cypresses. It seized a large yellow rat snake, and a struggle ensued for ca. 20 sec. After that time, the snake disappeared from view, and the hawk appeared confused. The hawk remained on the branch for another minute, and then departed with nothing in its beak or talons. The snake apparently escaped predation, though we were unable to ascertain its whereabouts following the attack.

During the attack, a large shed skin was knocked off the branch and dangled into our view. We estimated the length of the visible portion as approximately 1 m. This strongly suggests that the snake was shedding its skin while resting on a branch near the top of the forest canopy. We are not aware of any other records of arboreal shedding in *E. o. quadrivittata*, but apparently it is common in *E. o. obsoleta* (Stickel et al. 1980. Amer. Midl. Nat. 103:1–14). Our observation suggests that shedding may increase a snake's visibility to aerial predators or reduce its ability to flee quickly.

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**ELAPHE QUADRIVIRGATA** (Japanese Striped Snake). **PREDATION.** On 29 August 2000 at ca. 1900 h, I caught a large-mouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) (142 mm SL, 173 mm TL) while fishing in an irrigation pond in Higashi-Hiroshima,