**Corallus hortulanus** (Linnaeus, 1758) (Squamata: Serpentes: Boidae) diet: predation events on two Passeriformes at the Atlantic Rainforest, southeastern Brazil

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**Corallus hortulanus** (Linnaeus, 1758) is a medium sized snake, widely distributed in South-America (Henderson, 1997). It is nocturnal and arboreal, generally found near water (Cunha and Nascimento, 1978; Martins and Oliveira, 1998; da Costa e Silva and Henderson, 2010; Henderson et al., 2013). It feeds mainly on small mammals and birds, and rarely on lizards and frogs (Pizzatto et al., 2009).

On November 16th, 2010, in Reserva Ecológica Guapiaçu, Cachoeiras de Macacu, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (22°25'36.50"S, 42°44'55.13"W, 200 m elevation), an adult *Corallus hortulanus* (MNJR 19973, adult, female, snout-vent length 1310 mm, tail length 271 mm; Fig. 1A) was found on a tree, ca. three meters above the ground. When manipulated, it regurgitated a partially digested adult of *Tangara ornata* (MNA 8167), which was identified due to the characteristic blue feathers present on lower back, rump and superior primary coverts and a few yellow feathers on the wing bent. Due to the stage of digestion (upper body missing and gonads decayed), sex could not be determined.

*Tangara ornata* (Sparrman, 1789) (Fig. 1B) is a fairly common species occurring in the coastal region of SE Brazil, from sea level up to 1750 m. It inhabits forests, forest edges, shrubby clearings and surroundings of human inhabitations. Regularly occurring in groups, it forages mostly above the ground. Its diet consists primarily on fruit, but it also takes nectar from flowers and searches for insects in lichen and moss (Sick, 1997; Isler and Isler, 1999; Willis and Oniki, 2003; Sigrist, 2006; Ridgely and Tudor, 2009).

In November 1990, at Centro de Primatologia do Rio de Janeiro, Parque Estadual dos Três Picos, Guapimirim, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (22°30'34.27"S, 42°48'54.18"W, 80 m elevation), Dr. Alcides Picinatti collected a road-killed adult *Corallus hortulanus* (IVB 1553, female, SLV 1280 mm, TL 305 mm), which had a *Turdus leucomelas* (MNA 8817) inside its stomach. It was also partially digested (head and throat missing), and was identified by comparisons with other specimens at the Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro ornithological collection. Identification was based on the presence of rufous underwing coverts, contrasting with the pale-rufous belly, creamy-buff crissum and rufous-brown back colors.

*Turdus leucomelas* Vieillot, 1818 (Fig. 1C) is also fairly common on a variety of semi open habitats (borders of humid forests, clearings, savannas, gallery woodlands, urban areas). Often terrestrial, it feeds on insects, annelids, and even on small vertebrates (Sick, 1997; Willis and Oniki, 2003; Sigrist, 2006; Ridgely and Tudor, 2009).

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Little is known about the diet of several snake species (Ebérard and Vrcibradic, 2007; Mendonça et al., 2011), and only a few studies identify preys to a species level, especially because they are often in advanced stage of digestion (e.g. Martins and Oliveira, 1998; Ebérard and Vrcibradic, 2007). For Corallus hortulanus, at least, eight birds were identified to the species level so far (cf. Henderson, 1993; Martins and Oliveira, 1998; da Costa e Silva and Henderson, 2010; Henderson and Pauers, 2012). However, this is the first report of Tangara ornata and Turdus leucomelas as prey items for this species. Here we encourage more precise reports on snakes’ preys by performing multidisciplinary studies through collaboration among different specialists in zoology.

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References


Figure 1. A. Tree boa Corallus hortulanus adult female (MNJ 19973) found at Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu, municipality of Cachoeiras de Macacu, state of Rio de Janeiro, southeastern Brazil. B. Golden-Chevroned Tanager Tangara ornata. C. Pale-Breasted Thrush Turdus leucomelas. Photography: A. TSS; B-C. Julio C. Silveira.


