Predation on Spix’s whiptail *Ameivula ocellifera* (Spix, 1825) by the Ferruginous Pygmy-owl *Glaucidium brasiliianum* (Gmelin, 1788) in northeastern Brazil

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Lizards are food source for many birds, including owls (Poulin et al., 2001; Sick, 2001; Carrera et al., 2008; Gomes, 2013). The Ferruginous Pygmy-owl *Glaucidium brasiliianum* (Gmelin, 1788), with approximately 16.5 cm body length, displays nocturnal/diurnal behaviour and has a diet composed principally of arthropods and small vertebrates, including amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and other birds (Sick, 2001). The species inhabits a wide variety of habitats and is widely distributed, occurring from Arizona (USA) to Argentina, and throughout all of Brazil (Sick, 2001; Perlo, 2009; Birdlife International, 2017).

Lizards of the genus *Ameivula* are currently represented by 11 species that are widely distributed in South America (e.g., Arias et al., 2011; Harvey et al., 2012). Spix’s whiptail, *Ameivula ocellifera* (Spix, 1825), is quite common in areas of Atlantic Forest, Caatinga (dryland vegetation), Cerrado (Neotropical savannah), and Restingas (sandy, coastal vegetation) in Brazil (Vanzolini et al., 1980; Rocha et al., 2000; Santana et al., 2008, 2010). In this paper, we report a predation event on *A. ocellifera* by *Glaucidium brasiliianum* in an area of shrub Caatinga vegetation in the semiarid region of northeastern Brazil.

During an avifaunal survey on 06 January 2011 at 16:00 h, at the Sítio Malhada da Pedra, Serra Negra do Norte Municipality, Rio Grande do Norte State, northeastern Brazil (ca. -6.616414°S, -37.365461°W), we observed some species of passerine birds emitting alarm calls. At that time, we also observed an adult *G. brasiliianum* on a branch of a nearby tree (*Anadenanthera colubrina*) holding in its talons a partially consumed *A. ocellifera* (Fig. 1).

Records on predation of whiptail lizards by birds are scarce. Proudfoot and Beason (1997) reported on the predation of Texas spotted whiptail lizards, *Cnemidophorus scalaris* (as *Aspidoscelis scalaris*), by

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**Figure 1.** A Ferruginous Pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasiliianum*) preying on an adult male Spix’s whiptail (*Ameivula ocellifera*). Photograph by Dandara M.M. Bezerra.


