Predator-prey interactions are sporadic observations and prey items are rarely identifiable to the species level in the wild. Understanding the existing types of interactions in ecosystems is crucial to comprehend prey-predator relationships due to the complexity of food chains in natural communities (Poulin et al., 2001). The functioning of these relationships may contribute to a better understanding of the energy flow through ecosystems and its dynamics (Law and Blackford, 1992; Granzinolli and Motta-Junior, 2007).

**Aspronema dorsivittatum** (Cope, 1862) is a small lizard (maximum body size in this genus range between 76–84 mm snout-vent length [SVL]) distributed along the South of South America, throughout Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais, and Goiás states) (Uetz, 2018). This species inhabits exclusively grass fields and has diurnal habits, viviparous reproduction (brood size range of 5–8 individuals), and an arthropod-based diet (Carreira and Maneyro, 2013).

**Falco sparverius** Linnaeus, 1758 is a small diurnal raptor with a maximum body length of 25 cm and evident sexual dimorphism. This species is found from North to South of the American continent and is widely distributed in Brazil (Sick, 1984). It preferably inhabits grass fields and has a diet based on insects (beetles, crickets, and moths) and small vertebrates (reptiles, birds, and small mammals) (Zilio, 2006).

On 23 June 2015, an *A. dorsivittatum* female (5.1 cm SVL; 2.4 g) was collected after being captured, killed, and abandoned by a *F. sparverius* male (Figure 1) in a peri-urban area of São Gabriel. São Gabriel municipality is located in the South Central region of the Pampa biome, in Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil (30°19'58.8'' S, 54°21'48.5'' W, 114 m a.s.l.). The lizard had two perforations in the body, one in the neck and one in the abdomen, and lacked the tail, which indicates a possible caudal autotomy as a defense behaviour against the falcon. The specimen was deposited in the Herpetological Collection of the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (ZUFSM 3887).

According to Poulin et al. (2001), small-bodied lizards are predated by a wide variety of animals; reptile predation has been recorded by several bird diet studies (e.g., Cabral et al., 2006; Zilio, 2006; Ramos et al., 2011; Bernarde et al., 2016; Zocche et al., 2018). However, identification to the species level is not always possible in these studies due to the advanced decomposition stage of prey. This is the first record of attempted predation of *A. dorsivittatum* by *F. sparverius*.

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References


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Figure 1. (A) Falco sparverius predating Aspronema dorsivittatum. (B) Prey abandoned by the falcon. Photos: CAA.