Philodryas mattogrossensis Koslowsky, 1898, is a species in a monotypic clade, sharing a common ancestor with the clade containing the other 20 species of the genus (Grazziotin et al., 2012; Zaher et al., 2014). It has a rich distribution in central South America including southwestern Brazil and the Chaco region of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay (Cei, 1993; Embert, 2007; Cacciali, 2010). Given its broad distribution, currently there are no concerns regarding the conservation status of *P. mattogrossensis* anywhere within its range (Embert, 2007; Motte et al., 2009; Giraudo et al., 2012). However, the biology and ecology of the species remain poorly described, and the species is assumed to be similar to others in the genus (Ceí, 1993; Norman, 1994; Leynaud and Bucher, 1999). On the other hand, *Teius teyou* (Daudin, 1802) is a common teiid that prefers open habitats (Videla and Puig, 1994; Pelegrin et al., 2009). The distribution of the lizard is sympatric with *P. mattogrossensis* throughout most of its range (Cei, 1993; Embert, 2007; Cacciali, 2010). The biology and ecology of *T. teyou* is well documented (Gudynas, 1979; Varela and Bucher, 2001; Pelegrin et al. 2013). It has been reported as prey for snakes (Giraudo et al., 2014), owls (Carrera et al., 2008) and armadillos (Greggor, 1980).

Here we report on a *Philodryas mattogrossensis* preying on a *Teius teyou* on a cattle ranch “Estancia APT” four km from the southeastern border of Parque Nacional Defensores del Chaco in the Dry Chaco Ecoregion (20.263°S, 59.543°W). The encounter occurred on a pasture of Gatton Panic grass established in 2008 by clear cutting dry forest and leaving the logs on the ground. Cattle movements within the pasture and around the logs have established trails.

On 31 March, 2012, at 14:29 an individual *Philodryas mattogrossensis* was observed on a trail ambushing an adult *Teius teyou*. The snake immobilized the lizard with three tight body loops around the abdominal and pelvic area (Fig. 1A). It bit the lizard’s neck, presumably inserting its posterior fangs, and chewed on the lizard for about three minutes (Fig. 1B, 1C). The lizard struggled to escape but was unsuccessful. When the snake detected human presence, it left the *T. teyou*, and took refuge in a bush, where it mimicked a branch (Fig. 1D). We kept recording the activity of the lizard, which, when released, appeared to be disoriented. At 14:33 its hind legs were extended and rigid (Fig. 1E), at 14:34 the forelimbs became extended and rigid (Fig. 1F), and by 14:44 the *T. teyou* appeared to be dead (Fig. 1G).

This observation supports Leynaud and Bucher (1999), who state that *P. mattogrossensis* occurs in trees, as well as on the ground. This is the second prey item recorded for the species; Schalk (2010) found *Leptodactylus bufonius* in the stomach of a specimen collected in the Bolivian Chaco. The venom of this opistoglyph snake took 15 minutes to kill *Teius teyou*, but there is no information on its composition. The evaluation of the venom of this species, compared to the others in the genus, would be of interest because of the evolutionary distance between *P. mattogrossensis* and the other *Philodryas as proposed by Grazziotin et al. (2012).*

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**References**

Figure 1. Sequence of the predation attempt by *Philodryas mattogrossensis* on *Teius teyou*. A) The snake captures the lizard on bare ground trail. B) The snake bites the lizard at the neck. C) *P. mattogrossensis* continues biting *T. teyou* for three minutes. D) The snake, as detected by human presence, takes refuge in a bush and mimics a branch. E) *T. teyou* attempts to flee but its hind legs become rigid. F) In a minute interval the rigidity reaches anterior members too. G) *T. teyou* dies 15 minutes after being bitten by *P. mattogrossensis*.
Powerful venom evidence in *Philodryas mattogrossensis* feeding on a *Teius teyou*