

Predation of Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) by Guira cuckoo (*Guira guira*) in Northeastern Brazil

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ABSTRACT: The Guira Cuckoo is an opportunistic species, with a carnivorous preference, preying mainly on arthropods. Here we make the first report on the consumption of Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) by the Guira Cuckoo.

KEY-WORDS: Cuculidae, diet, lizard.

Guira Cuckoo is an opportunistic species with a carnivorous preference that feeds mainly on arthropods (Schubart *et al.* 1965; Kokubum and Zacca, 2003; Mesquita, 2009). Food items included in the Guira Cuckoo's diet have been reported by several authors (Marelli, 1919; Alvarez, 1933; Zotta, 1940; Hudson, 1974; De La Peña, 1977; Beltzer, 1995; Soave *et al.* 2008; Mesquita, 2009; Repenning *et al.* 2009; and Morais *et al.* 2013). However, none of these sources report the reptile *Iguana iguana* serving as prey to the Guira Cuckoo. Here we report the first record of a Guira Cuckoo preying on a Green Iguana in Brazil.

We observed the event on January 13th 2013, around 14h in a non-urbanized *Caatinga* area with predominance of few large trees and some shrubs, near the city of Nova Jaguaribara, Ceará, Brazil (05°30'15" S and 38°26'34" W).

While observing a group of eight individuals of *G. guira* foraging on the floor near the base of a cashew tree (*Anacardium occidentale*), we noticed that one of the individuals caught a prey and flew up to the tree. The prey was identified as a juvenile individual of Green Iguana *Iguana iguana*, characterized by its approximate size of 30 cm, with vivid green colour and the absence of a dorsal row of spines (Figure 1).

For a few moments, the bird deposited the felled prey on the branch of a tree, deferring several pecks on the head and body of the prey. Sometimes the bird held the prey on its beak, apparently mindful to the approach of any other bird that could compete for the prey. At a given moment three other individuals of *G. guira* landed on the

same branch, and then the bird took off with the prey on its beak for a given location that could not be monitored, making it impossible to observe the intake of the prey.

Reviewing the main studies involving *G. guira*, none reports *I. iguana* as part of its diet, although other lizards such as *Ophioides vertebralis* and *Anguinae* sp. have been reported, along with various species of amphibians and even unidentified reptiles (Beltzer, 1995; Soave *et al.*, 2008; Repenning *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, we can consider that our record is the first of a *G. guira* preying on a reptile with the size of an *Iguana iguana*, the only species of the genus to occur in Brazil.



FIGURE 1. *Guira guira* preying an individual of *Iguana iguana* on a tree in a non-urbanized area of *Caatinga*, near the city of Nova Jaguaribara, Brazil.

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