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FIG. 1. *Crotalus lepidus* post-mortem with *Aspidoscelis tesselatus* prey item removed from body cavity from Hudspeth County, Texas, USA.



FIG. 2. Carcass of a juvenile *Crotalus lepidus* containing an adult *Aspidoscelis marmoratus* from Hudspeth County, Texas, USA.

the carcass was not collected. Presumably, this young rattlesnake died due to the ingestion of a prey item that was apparently too large (reviewed in Kornilev et al. 2023. *Biol. Rev.* 98:263–283). *Crotalus lepidus* has been reported to feed on freshly killed individuals and carcasses of *C. texanus* at IMRS (Mata-Silva et al. 2011. *Herpetol. Rev.* 42:438–439; DeSantis et al. 2015. *Herpetol. Rev.* 46:268–269), and the consumption of this species and of individuals of *A. tesselatus* and *A. marmoratus* reported herein was expected, as these species are the most common lizards at IMRS (Mata-Silva et al. 2013. *Southwest. Nat.* 58:209–215).

Although *Aspidoscelis* have been previously recorded as prey items of *C. lepidus*, they were identified only to the genus level due to the difficulty of identifying stomach and fecal remains (Beaupre 1995, *op. cit*; Holycross et al. 2002, *op. cit.*). To the best of our knowledge, these reports represent the first species-level documentation of *A. tesselatus* and *A. marmoratus* in the diet of *C. lepidus*.

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CROTALUS VIRIDIS (Prairie Rattlesnake). DIET and SCAVENGING. Rattlesnakes use prey-acquisition strategies that rely primarily on ambush foraging. Although scavenging behavior has been



FIG. 1. Adult *Crotalus viridis* attempting to scavenge a dead *Sturnella neglecta* (Western Meadowlark) in southeastern Alberta, Canada.

reported in some populations and species (Gillingham and Baker 1981. *Z. Tierpsychol.* 55:217–227; Lillywhite et al. 2008. *Bioscience* 58:947–955), reports of scavenging are still relatively rare. The frequency of scavenging in rattlesnake populations is unknown, but this behavior could be advantageous for individuals that opportunistically locate areas containing a higher-than-normal abundance of small animal carcasses (e.g., next to roadways). The diet of *Crotalus viridis* is composed primarily of small mammals, but they have occasionally been documented eating lizards, anurans, and birds (e.g., Holycross 1993. M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska; Duvall et al. 1985. *N. Geo. Res.* 1:80–111). Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine if the prey items of *C. viridis* documented in gut contents were obtained by the typical method of ambush hunting or a result of scavenging behavior.

At 1748 h on 5 July 2022 on Buffalo Trail (Highway 41) in southeastern Alberta, Canada (50.78448°N, 110.09770°W; WGS 84; 709 m elev.; air temp. = 23°C), we found a *C. viridis* attempting to consume an adult male *Sturnella neglecta* (Western Meadowlark) that was presumably hit by a vehicle and dead on the road. The individual released the carcass and assumed a defensive position when approached. The snake was then left alone (ca. 4 min.) and began to investigate the carcass in the same manner as many *Crotalus* spp. after envenomating prey (Fig. 1; Teshera et al. 2021. *Amphibia-Reptilia* 42:491–501). However, it is unlikely this prey item was envenomated prior to the snake attempting to consume it, as we observed many meadowlarks killed by vehicles in the area and the dead bird showed signs of a vehicular mortality (wings were bent and the feathers untidy). Thus, it is probable that the individual was opportunistically scavenging a dead *S. neglecta* when found.

To our knowledge, this is the first report of *C. viridis* attempting to scavenge a road-killed animal in the wild (although the diet of *C. viridis* is known to include *S. neglecta*; Gannon and Secoy 1984. *J. Herpetol.*:13–19). Although it is often mentioned that viperids scavenge (DeVault and Krochmal 2002. *Herpetologica* 58:429–436) and anecdotal reports can be important in generating a more holistic view of a species behavior, more systematic and quantitative studies of the behavioral foraging strategies of free-ranging viperids are needed to determine how important scavenging is compared to the typical ambush hunting strategy.

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