Tropidophis pardalis

Four species of House Geckos in the genus Hemidactylus have become established in Puerto Rico; the introductions of Hemidactylus mabouia, H. angulatus, and H. turcicus probably date to colonial times (Rivero 1998), whereas the introduction of H. frenatus was more recent (Sanchez 2018). Of the four, the Tropical House Gecko (H. mabouia) is the most common and widely distributed, occurring in many urban and rural situations. Little is known about the interactions of these invasive geckos with the ensembles of native reptiles on Caribbean Islands. Owen and Perry (2005) described a Tropical House Gecko by a Spotted Brown Trope (Tropidophis pardalis) in Cuba. Other reports have described various competitive interactions with Caribbean lizards (e.g., Powell 2003; Powell and Henderson 1992; Stroud 2016), and Borroto-Páez and Reyes (2019) described competitive interference between H. mabouia and endemic Cuban anoles (Anolis sp.).

The Puerto Rican Racer (Borikenophis portoricensis) is the largest of three native dipsadid snakes of the Puerto Rican Bank (SVL to 923 mm; Schwartz and Henderson 1991) and has an extensive distribution in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Rivero 1998; Henderson and Powell 2009; Mayer 2012). It is a largely ground-dwelling, diurnally active snake that uses mainly visual cues to locate prey consisting of small vertebrates, including introduced species like Hemidactylus mabouia (Henderson and Sajdak 1996; Rodriguez-Robles 2005). Because few studies have documented interactions among non-native and native species (e.g., Chiba 2010), we herein describe native Puerto Rican Racers exploiting two non-native species, Australian Pines (Casuarina equisetifolia) as habitat and a Tropical House Gecko as prey.

The predation event occurred between 1000 and 1030 h on 10 July 2003 while establishing an experimental plot...
This event and a second snake observed in another Australian Pine illustrate adaptations by a native species in order to exploit a new trophic resource and structural habitat available as a consequence of introducing non-native species (e.g., Gangoso et al. 2006).

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Literature Cited


