

***HYPSIGLENA JANI* (Chihuahuan Nightsnake). DIET and PREY SIZE.** Snakes of the genus *Hypsiglena* are known to primarily prey on lizards, although they also consume squamate eggs, snakes, amphibians, and insects (Dundee 1950. *Herpetologica* 6:28–30; Werler and Dixon 2000. *Texas Snakes: Identification, Distribution, and Natural History*. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas. 437 pp.; Ernst and Ernst 2003. *Snakes of the United States and Canada*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C. 668 pp.; Setser and Goode 2004. *Herpetol. Rev.* 35:177; Schulte et al. 2007. *Herpetol. Rev.* 38:467–468). In an extensive study of the diet of *H. torquata* from museum specimens (now recognized as six unique species, including *H. jani*), Rodríguez-Robles et al. (1999, *Copeia* 1999:93–100) reported lizards of the genera *Anniella*, *Elgaria*, *Cnemidophorus* (now *Aspidoscelis*), *Coleonyx*, *Crotaphytus*, *Gambelia*, *Holbrookia*, *Sceloporus*, *Uta*, and *Xantusia*. Recent observations of *H. jani* foraging behaviors have documented predation on introduced *Hemidactylus turcicus* (Mata-Silva et al. 2014. *Herpetol. Rev.* 45:338) and attempted predation on *Phrynosoma cornutum* (Myers and Soley-Guardia 2015. *Herpetol. Rev.* 46:274). Additionally, Rodríguez-Robles et al. (1999, *op. cit.*) noted that lizards of the genera *Aspidoscelis*, *Coleonyx*, and *Xantusia* were infrequently consumed when compared to other lizard genera and despite the greatly overlapping distributions of these genera with that of *Hypsiglena*. This disparate prey selection was attributed to chemosensory avoidance of *Hypsiglena* by these lizard genera (Rodríguez-Robles et al. 1999, *op. cit.*). To date, only two *Aspidoscelis* have been reported as prey items of *Hypsiglena*: *A. hyperythrus* (Rodríguez-Robles et al. 1999, *op. cit.*) and *A. tigris* (Diller and Wallace 1986, *Southwestern Nat.* 31:55–64). Additionally, the mean prey/predator mass ratio observed in this genus by Rodríguez-Robles et al. (1999, *op. cit.*) was 0.24 (range: 0.03–0.50). Lacey et al. (1996, *Can. Field. Nat.* 110:620–625) calculated the total weight of a juvenile Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*) using the posterior end of an individual that was regurgitated by an adult female *H. torquata* (now *H. chlorophaea*) and estimated a prey/predator mass ratio of 0.35–0.54. Here, we report an additional prey species consumed by *H. jani* as well as report a new maximum prey/predator mass ratio for this species.



FIG. 1. Adult female Chihuahuan Nightsnake (*Hypsiglena jani*; TNHC 66601) collected on 27 May 2005 in Jeff Davis County, Texas, USA. This individual had recently consumed two *Aspidoscelis inornata* (Little Striped Whiptail).

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On 27 May 2005, an adult female *Hypsiglena jani* (TNHC 66601 [TJL 1431]; 292 mm SVL; 55 mm tail length; 13.1 g) was collected on a gravel road leading to C. E. Miller Ranch, ca. 5.3 km W of Valentine, Jeff Davis County, Texas, USA (30.58028°N, 104.54810°W; WGS 84). This individual was found crossing the road at 2219 h while it was raining with an ambient air temperature of 13.9°C. A large food bolus was observed in this individual and upon preserving this snake, we found two *Aspidoscelis inornata* (Little Striped Whiptail) that had been recently consumed, both head first, with the first food item mostly digested (Fig. 1). The total weight of the two food items was 7.6 g (larger, intact *A. inornata*: 5.4 g; smaller, mostly digested *A. inornata*: 2.2 g) and represents a prey/predator mass ratio of 0.58, though the ratio was likely much higher prior to the digestion of the first *A. inornata*. To the best of our knowledge, this represents the first published account of *H. jani* consuming *A. inornata* and a new maximum prey/predator mass ratio for this species, exceeding the previous estimated maximum of 0.54 (Lacey et al. 1996, *op. cit.*).

We thank the Miller family for their continued hospitality and support of our herpetological research program and J. Farkas for reviewing earlier drafts of this manuscript. This specimen was collected under a Texas Parks and Wildlife Scientific Collecting Permit (SPR-1097-912) issued to TJL.

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