

prey include fishes, adult and larval amphibians, earthworms, chipmunks (*Eutamias* sp.), shrew (*Sorex vagrans*), slugs, snails, leeches, insects, lizards, snakes, birds, and carrion (Fleaharty 1967. *Southwest. Nat.* 12:207–230; Rossman et al. 1996. *The Garter Snakes: Evolution and Ecology*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. 332 pp.; Degenhardt et al. 2005. *Amphibians and Reptiles of New Mexico*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico. 430 pp.). Among these documented predation events, birds and lizards are very rarely mentioned as prey. *Passarella* spp. were recorded as prey items in *T. e. vagrans* (Fitch 1940. *Univ. California Publ. Zool.* 44:1–150). There are also diet records of a Yellow-eyed Junco (*Junco phaeonotus*; Drost 2020. In Holycross and Mitchell [eds.], *Snakes of Arizona*, pp. 401–417. ECO Publishing, Rodeo, New Mexico. 860 pp.) and a Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*; Fleaharty 1967, *op. cit.*). Sagebrush Lizards (*Sceloporus graciosus*) and Western Skinks (*Plestiodon skiltonianus*) are documented prey items of *T. e. vagrans* (Tanner 1949. *Herpetologica* 5:85–86). There are six instances of Plateau Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus tristichus [undulatus]*) and one instance of Greater Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi [douglasii]*) in the diet of *T. e. vagrans* (Gehlbach 1965. *Proc. U.S. Natl. Mus.* 116:243–332). Six lizards (*Sceloporus*, *Uta*, and *Eumeces*) and four birds (*Passarella* spp.) were recorded as prey items in eight *T. e. vagrans* (Fitch 1940. *Univ. California Publ. Zool.* 44:1–150). Here we report the first record of a Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*) and a house wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) as prey of *T. e. vagrans*, the first records, to our knowledge, of decapitated prey items in a *T. e. vagrans*, and the first record since 1965 of *P. hernandesi* as prey of *T. e. vagrans*.

BLC collected a male *T. e. vagrans* (MSB:Herp:73465) on 13 July 2006, near Upper Trout Lakes, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico (36.60553°N, 106.37329°W; WGS 84; 2871 m elev.). Prepared specimen measurements were 568 mm SVL, 113 mm tail (stubbled tail), 164 g. This snake contained a bolus, which was palpated at time of capture and identified as an *M. lincolnii* (MSB:Bird:50230). The head was missing from the bird. The *M. lincolnii* specimen measured 55 mm from the anterior tip to the posterior tip of the spine and weighed 15.8 g.

On 1 July 2019, along Dry Blue Creek, ca. 12.1 air km southwest of Luna, Apache National Forest, Catron County, New Mexico, we captured a *T. e. vagrans* with a bolus. The snake was captured by hand 2 m from the stream's edge (33.7337°N, 109.0346°W; WGS 84; 1983 m elev.). This snake measured 405 mm SVL, 125 mm tail, 32.5 g (mass with bolus). The *T. e. vagrans* regurgitated a small *T. aedon* (MSB:Bird:50229), also without its head. The *T. aedon* specimen measured 37 mm from the anterior tip of the spine to the posterior end of the spine and weighed 5.0 g.

That both birds were missing their heads in independent predation events seems noteworthy. *Thamnophis e. elegans* are known to consume carrion, so it is possible that these were found headless by the snakes prior to consumption. It strikes us as unlikely that the bird was decapitated by the snake during handling. Another possibility is that the heads were severed internally during digestion, as both birds were partially digested prior to regurgitation.

On 1 July 2019, along Dry Blue Creek, ca. 12.1 air km southwest of Luna, Apache National Forest, Catron County, New Mexico, USA, we captured a female *T. e. vagrans* with a large bolus. The snake was captured in a minnow trap set on the edge of the stream (33.7309°N, 109.0352°W; WGS 84; 1977 m elev.). This snake measured 545 mm SVL, 174 mm tail length, 80.8 g. This snake's

palped bolus was an adult *P. hernandesi* (MSB:Herp:100928), which measured ca. 88 mm SVL and 33.2 g, constituting a 41% prey mass to snake mass ratio. The lizard was ingested hind leg first and partially digested. While snakes may eat prey head last, these events are usually smooth prey (i.e., amphibians or mammals), and with much lower snake to prey ratio than we observed (Loop and Bailey 1972. *Psychon. Sci.* 28:167–169). Gartersnakes often handle anurans hindleg first (pers. obs.), but to our knowledge this not been documented with lizards. It is especially noteworthy considering the hazardous nature of rear-facing horns and spines of *Phrynosoma* lizards. The snake sustained no apparent injuries.

Birds were identified by Andrew B. Johnson, Museum of Southwest Biology, UNM, Albuquerque and lizards were identified by J. Tomas Giermakowski, Museum of Southwest Biology, UNM, Albuquerque. Specimens were collected under NMDGF Scientific Collecting Permit #2969.

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TRIMERESURUS INSULARIS (White-lipped Island Pit Viper). **TERRESTRIALITY.** *Trimeresurus insularis* is an arboreal viper known from nearly every major island of the Lesser Sunda archipelago of Indonesia and Timor-Leste (Uetz et al. 2022. The Reptile Database. www.reptile-database.org, 15 Oct 2022). It is arboreal in nature, inhabiting vegetation up to ca. 15 m high (Das 2010. *Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers, London, UK. 376 pp.), and is found in natural forests, disturbed forests, bamboo forests, monocultures, and home gardens up to 1200 m elevation (Mertens 1930. *Abh Senck Naturf Ges* 42:117–344).

The species is common at Komodo National Park in Indonesia (Somaweera et al. 2018. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Komodo National Park*. National Park Authority. 31 pp). While specimens are mostly found on shrubs and trees in riparian habitats within monsoon forests (de Lang 2011. *The Snakes of the Lesser Sunda*



FIG. 1. *Trimeresurus insularis* in-situ on the ground at Padar Island, Komodo National Park, Indonesia.

Islands, Indonesia. Edition Chimaira, Germany. 359 pp), few specimens have been found among dense strands of tufted grasses (*Andropogon* spp.) at the edge of savanna habitats on Komodo Island (Auffenberg 1980. Bull. Florida State Mus. Biol. Sci. 25:39–156).

While on a recreational nighttime visit (1900–2130 h) to Padar Island on 4 October 2022, we encountered 14 specimens of *T. insularis* within an area of roughly 0.4 km² (centered around 8.65963°S, 119.55680°E; WGS 84). Of these, two were of the blue color morph and were found in *Tamarindus indica* trees, and the rest of green color morph. Of the 12 green individuals, eight were located on the ground, all fully or partially coiled and in ambush posture. Four were within 1–2 m from well-spaced trees and were facing the trunk of the tree (Fig. 1A). The other four were in the open grassland, two at the base of grass clumps (Fig. 1B), and two at the edge of a pile of abandoned wooden planks (Fig. 1C). There were no large trees within at least 10 m from these respective locations. All individuals were adults with an estimated SVL of over 25 cm. None attempted to move or escape when first approached. Based on opportunistic observational records by the rangers at the national park, it is common to encounter *T. insularis* on the ground at Padar, but not at the two other larger islands of the park- Komodo and Rinca.

While this species occasionally perches near to the ground suspended from vegetation (Reily et al. 2016. Herpetol. Rev. 47:318–319.) and can be found actively foraging among ground vegetation near streams in Bali, repeated visits to Komodo and Rinca islands over eight years have not resulted in any specimens on the ground. Compared to the larger Komodo and Rinca islands, Padar has much drier conditions and very sparse vegetation with the vast majority of the island covered in short grass savannah. Therefore, it is likely that the population of *T. insularis* is adapted to a more terrestrial mode of foraging. Like many other pitvipers, *T. insularis* appears to be an opportunistic feeder and is known to take terrestrial prey (Reily et al. 2016, *op. cit.*). The orientation of heads towards the tree trunks is likely to ambush lizards climbing on and off the trees. These observations expand the ecological niche of this widespread species.

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