



PHOTO BY CLINTON J. GUADIANA

FIG. 1. Adult *Coniophanes imperialis* from Cameron County, Texas, USA, with two recently regurgitated neonatal *Neotoma* sp. (surmised to be *N. micropus*).

(Campbell 1998. Amphibians and Reptiles of Northern Guatemala, the Yucatán, and Belize. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. xiii + 380 pp.; Werler and Dixon 2000. Texas Snakes: Identification, Distribution, and Natural History. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas. xv + 437 pp.; Heimes 2016. Herpetofauna Mexicana Vol 1: Snakes of Mexico. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. 572 pp.). This species is active during the day and night (McKay 2024. Reptiles of Oaxaca: Turtles, Crocodiles, Lizards, and Snakes of Mexico's Most Biodiverse State. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. 544 pp.), allowing it to exploit a wide range of prey. Furthermore, *C. imperialis* is opisthoglyphous, possessing enlarged rear maxillary fangs that may aid in subduing prey (Werler and Dixon 2000, *op. cit.*). While not considered dangerous to humans (Schmidt and Davis 1941. Field Book of Snakes of the United States and Canada. The Cornwall Press, Inc., Cornwall, New York. xi + 357 pp.; McKay 2024; *op. cit.*), *C. imperialis* possesses mild venom that assists in immobilizing its prey (Brown 1937. Copeia 1937:234; Lemos-Espinal and Dixon 2012. Amphibians and Reptiles of San Luis Potosí. Eagle Mountain Publishing, Eagle Mountain, Utah. xii + 300 pp.)

The diet of *C. imperialis* is diverse, primarily consisting of amphibians, reptiles, and, to a lesser extent, rodents (Ernst and Ernst 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C. ix + 668 pp.). Authors have documented the consumption of frogs, including species from the families Bufonidae, Eleutherodactylidae, Hylidae, Leptodactylidae, and Microhylidae (Campbell 1998, *op. cit.*; Lee 2000. A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of the Maya World: the Lowlands of Mexico, Northern Guatemala, and Belize. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York. xi + 402 pp.; Lemos-Espinal and Dixon 2012, *op. cit.*; Valencia-Herverth et al. 2021. Herpetol. Rev. 52:151). Reptilian prey includes species in the families Scincidae and Typhlopidae (Conant 1955. Am. Mus. Novit. 1726:1–6; Campbell 1998, *op. cit.*; Lemos-Espinal and Dixon 2012, *op. cit.*), as well as lizard eggs (Frazier et al. 2007. Herpetol. Rev. 38:86); additionally, an instance of attempted cannibalism has been reported (Oakley and Núñez-Robles 2023. Rept. Amphib. 30:e18991). There are also records of *C. imperialis* consuming insects and invertebrates (Campbell 1998, *op. cit.*). Though rodents are not commonly mentioned as prey, there is a report of “young mice” being regurgitated,

CONIOPHANES IMPERIALIS (Regal Black-striped Snake).

DIET. *Coniophanes imperialis* occurs from extreme southern Texas, USA, southward along the eastern coast of Mexico, throughout the Yucatán Peninsula, and into northern Honduras

and captive individuals have consumed unidentified rodents (Conant 1955, *op. cit.*). Otherwise, little information exists on the presence of rodents in the diet of *C. imperialis*. Here, we provide new information on rodent consumption in wild *C. imperialis*.

On 16 October 2017, CJG collected an adult *C. imperialis* (SVL ca. 373 mm, tail length ca. 91 mm) in northeastern Cameron County, Texas, USA (26.19214°N, 97.39006°W; WGS 84). The individual was found crawling in the open at 1647 h, moving awkwardly due to a large food bolus. The snake was collected to be photographed, and ca. 1 h later, the snake regurgitated two neonatal rodents (Fig. 1; photo voucher TNHC 117493, Biodiversity Collections, The University of Texas at Austin). The rodents appeared to have been recently consumed and constituted ca. 75% of the snake's total body mass. The rodents were identified as members of the genus *Neotoma* (Cricetidae; packrat or woodrat) and surmised to be *N. micropus* (Southern Plains Woodrat) based on being the sole member of this genus in the region. After photographing the snake, it was released back at the site of capture. Though *C. imperialis* is primarily recognized as consuming anurans (Tennant 1984. The Snakes of Texas. Texas Monthly Press, Austin, Texas. 561 pp.), this observation helps expand what is known about the diet of this species.

We thank M. Pons, Jr. for his efforts identifying the rodent specimens, T. LaDuc for accessioning the photo into the TNHC collections, and members of the Davis Herpetology Lab for their feedback. Specimen was collected and photographed under a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Zoological Permit (ZOO-0790-004).

JACOB E. KUSCHEL, Department of Biology, Eastern New Mexico University, 1500 S Avenue K, Portales, New Mexico 88130, USA (e-mail: jake.kuschel@enmu.edu); **CLINTON J. GUADIANA**, Department of Herpetology, Gladys Porter Zoo, 500 Ringgold Street, Brownsville, Texas 78520, USA (e-mail: clint@gpz.org); **DREW R. DAVIS**, Department of Biology, Eastern New Mexico University, ENMU Station 33, 1500 S Avenue K, Portales, New Mexico 88130, USA, and Biodiversity Collections, Department of Integrative Biology, The University of Texas at Austin, 10100 Burnet Road, PRC 176-R400, Austin, Texas 78758, USA (e-mail: drew.davis@enmu.edu).