

Mating behavior of Amazon Treeboas, *Corallus hortulanus* (Squamata: Boidae), on Batatas Island, Piauí, Brazil

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Even for relatively common species, remarkably little is known about the mating behavior of snakes observed in the field. Among species of the Neotropical genus of arboreal boids (*Corallus* Daudin, 1803), field-based observations of mating have been made only for *Corallus annulatus* (Cope, 1875) (Muñoz et al., 2013), and *C. hortulanus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (which was interrupted by tamarins; see Bartecki and Heymann, 1987). Here we present data on two observations of mating in the geographically widespread Amazon Treeboa, *C. hortulanus*. One is a fragment that provides little more than a date, whereas the other is a detailed account made by the senior author on Batatas Island, Piauí, Brazil.

During September 2010 at 1630 h (still daylight), a pair of *C. hortulanus* was observed copulating while coiled on a branch of a mangrove tree (*Rhizophora mangle*) on Ilha das Canarias along Guirindo Creek. On the night of 27 June 2013 at 2005 h along Camaleões Creek, a mating pair of *C. hortulanus* was observed and photographed. The male was yellowish, and its total length was about one meter; the female was gray with a total length of about 1.8 m. Both snakes were on a branch of the thorn-laden tree *Machaerium lunatum* at a height of 1.5 m above the creek. The male had about 30% of its body wrapped in five coils around the female's body with their heads oriented in opposite

directions. At 2031 h the male oriented its head toward that of the female and rubbed its chin on the female's neck several times before turning to again face in the opposite direction. At 2032 h the male again oriented its head toward that of the female, again rubbing his chin on the female's neck and head; they remained in that position for eight minutes. At 2045 h, both boas had their heads oriented toward the end of the branch



Figure 1. *Corallus hortulanus* mating, Batatas Island, Piauí, Brazil. Photograph by Pedro da Costa Silva.

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(Figure 1). At 2110 h they started slowly moving their heads and the male loosened his coils from around the female and copulation was terminated. Both snakes then moved into the interior of one of the gallery forest trees. We do not know for how long the pair might have been *in copula* before encountered, or if observer presence might have led to early termination of mating (although the snakes exhibited neither indication nor concern that they were being observed).

The only previous observation of mating by free-ranging *Corallus hortulanus* occurred in Peru in July (Bartecki and Heymann, 1987). Births for this species have been recorded from January to July and in November (Pizzatto and Marques, 2007; Bernarde and Machado, 2010; Muñoz et al., 2013). Considering the broad distribution of the species, geographic variation in time of mating and parturition are not unexpected.

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