

## RESEARCH NOTES

### **PREDATION ON THE GREEN TREEFROG BY THE STAR-BELLIED ORB WEAVER, *ACANTHEPEIRA STELLATA* (ARANEAE, ARANEIDAE)**

Treefrogs are generally the predator and not the prey of spiders. McCormick and Polis (1982) listed three instances of in which the reverse was true: a funnel-web mygalomorph, *Atrax formidabilis* Rainbow; the araneid *Nephila clavipes* (L.); and a pisaurid, *Dolomedes okefenokensis* Bishop.

On 12 August 1989 at ca. 0830 hours, I observed a female star-bellied orb weaver spider, *Acanthepeira stellata* Walckenaer, feeding on the remains of a green treefrog, *Hyla cinerea*. The predation occurred ca. 1.0 km north north-east of Saucier, Harrison County, Mississippi. The spider was collected, along with its prey, from the remnants of a web which was attached from the top of a pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) along a fenceline (ca. 1.5 m above the ground) to an overhanging branch of a live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) which extended over the fence.

The spider was collected while it was feeding upon the right lateral side of the treefrog's abdomen. Both spider and treefrog were preserved in 80% ETOH and deposited in the author's personal collection. Judging by the condition of the treefrog, the capture was probably made during the previous night. The treefrog had received two separate bites. Other than the abdominal feeding punctures, the remaining bite was given to the dorsal area on the right thigh.

Measurements of spider and prey were made within 24 hours of collection. The length of the spider was 15.5 mm. The treefrog measured 3.3 cm from snout to vent. No dry weight was taken. No doubt the nearly two-fold difference in size betwixt predator and prey was compensated by the web and venom of the former.

#### LITERATURE CITED

McCormick, S. and G. A. Polis. 1982. Arthropods that prey on vertebrates. Biol. Rev., 57:29-58.

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