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New prey record for Baird's Patchnose Snake, *Salvadora bairdi* Jan, 1860

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Baird's Patchnose Snake, *Salvadora bairdi*, is a medium-sized snake with maximum snout–vent length (SVL) of 1090 mm (Rentería and Domínguez-Vega, 2024). It has a distinctly narrow head and neck, smooth enlarged scales, a prominent rostral scale, and a sharply pointed tail (Ramírez-Bautista et al., 2009). It ranges from the Sierra Madre Occidental in northwestern Mexico eastward to the Mexican Plateau and along the 1000-km Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt from Sonora to northwestern Oaxaca (Heimes, 2016). This snake preys on a wide variety of organisms, including lizards, snakes, and small mammals (Uribe-Peña et al., 1999; Carbajal-Márquez et al., 2014a; de la Torre-Robles et al., 2023). It is classified in the "special protection" category in Mexico (SEMARNAT, 2010).

Lizards of the *Sceloporus torquatus* group are among the most distinctive and diverse reptiles in Mexico. These saxicolous lizards, which can reach up to 80 mm in SVL, are characterized by a thick black collar bordered by white margins and vibrant, blue ventral scales (McKay et al., 2019; Carbajal-Márquez et al., 2014b). They are common prey for birds, snakes, and other reptiles (Carbajal-Márquez et al., 2014b).

On 16 March 2025 we found an individual of *S. bairdi* beneath a rock slab in a semi-disturbed subalpine scrub habitat in Atlacomulco State, Mexico (19.7685°N, 99.8516°W; WGS84; elevation 2523 m). The snake was in a lethargic state (substrate temperature: 4°C; humidity: 50%) and had a firm abdominal mass. Gentle mechanical stimulation led to regurgitation and yielded a partially decomposed prey item, of which only half retained identifiable features (Fig. 1). Stereomicroscope analysis confirmed that the prey was a Wiegmann's Spiny Lizard, *Sceloporus torquatus* Wiegmann, 1828 (Fig. 2). The snake (SVL = 785 mm; weight = 225 g) was released at the capture site. Field surveys confirmed the presence of *S. torquatus* (Fig. 3) and *S. grammicus* at the site, the latter also documented as part of the *S. bairdi* diet (Cisneros-Bernal et al., 2025).

Although *S. bairdi* is known to consume small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and eggs (Uribe-Peña et al., 1999), detailed dietary records remain scarce. In 2023, an attempted predation event on *Sceloporus melanogaster* was reported in Zacatecas State (de la Torre-Robles, 2023), supporting the trophic plasticity of the genus *Salvadora* (Cruz et al., 2019; Carbajal-Márquez et al., 2014). Our finding expands the list of known *Sceloporus* in the diet of the genus *Salvadora* to five species (*S. scalaris*, *S. melanogaster*, *S. jalapae*, *S. grammicus*, *S. torquatus*), reinforcing its role of these snakes as a generalist, actively foraging predators. These results highlight the need for further research into the feeding ecology of this diurnal species and its congeners to better understand their role in local trophic webs.

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Figure 1. *Salvadora bairdi* regurgitating a *Sceloporus torquatus*. Photo by Darian A. Neria-Hernández.

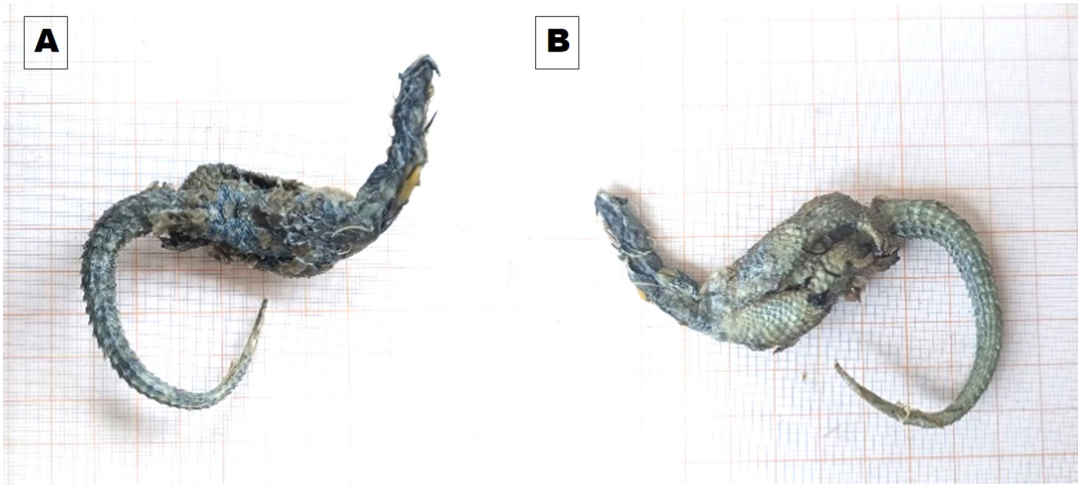

Figure 2. Dorsal (A) and ventral (B) views of *Sceloporus torquatus* regurgitated by *S. bairdi*. Photos by Irving Y. Rojas-Velasco.

Figure 3. Adult male *Sceloporus torquatus*, captured in the same area where the prey record for *S. bairdi* was obtained. Photo by Iván Martínez Vaca-León.

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