MASTICOPHIS FLAGELLUM TESTACEUS (Western Coachwhip). **PREDATION.** On 18 June 1988, on the northeast bank of the Colorado River (35 km south, 24 km west of Coleman, Coleman County, Texas), we observed a male western coachwhip (SVL = 915 mm, TL = 1149 mm, mass = 190 g without prey items) preying upon a female western rough green snake (*Opheodrys aestivus majalis*; SVL = 396 mm, TL = 618 mm, mass = 21.2 g). The encounter lasted 3 h 49 min from when we first noticed the snakes at 0940 h.

We were drawn to the snakes by a rustle in the vegetation under a pecan tree (*Carya illinoinensis*) 7 m from the river. There we observed the coachwhip searching for the nearby, slowly-moving green snake. The coachwhip sighted the green snake as it was half-way up a 30 cm cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) sapling, and seized its dorsum just anterior to the cloaca. The green snake reacted by wrapping its tail around the coachwhip's neck and pulling the rest of its body into the branches of the cedar elm. After 28 min of occasional tugging by both snakes, the green snake was released. The green snake immediately crawled to the upper limbs of the cedar elm sapling. It was seized in the tail region after a short, seemingly-frantic search by the coachwhip.

After 2 h 7 min of repeated seizing of the green snake near the cloaca, the coachwhip finally grasped the green snake in the neck region. This was the coachwhip's first grip near the head in eight attempts. The green snake immediately bit the coachwhip on the neck, but with no effect. The coachwhip then proceeded to swallow the green snake, but, the green snake's tail was completely entwined around a clump of nutgrass (*Cyperus* sp.), preventing the coachwhip from swallowing it completely.

The coachwhip spent the next 1 h 40 min attempting to free the half-swallowed green snake from the nutgrass. The coachwhip tried pulling from several different directions, and at one point even wrapped the green snake around a branch on the ground in attempting to dislodge it. The coachwhip also thrashed around and chewed on the tail near the knotted portion. Tail twitching by the green snake ceased about 25 min from being seized by the neck and partially swallowed. Finally, 3 h 49 min after first observing the encounter, the coachwhip pulled the green snake free. The coachwhip was immediately captured and the green snake and a sphinx moth caterpillar (Sphingidae: probably *Manduca* sp., but too mutilated for positive identification; TL = 57 mm, mass = 2.7 g) were palpated from it. After covering the caterpillar with dye (alizarin red) to enhance the teeth marks, it was examined under a microscope. Based on the size and spacing of the teeth marks it appeared that the caterpillar had been eaten by the green snake and then was regurgitated into the coachwhip's stomach.

The coachwhip was measured, marked, and released. The green snake and caterpillar were deposited in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections, catalog number TCWC 66176. We thank J.R. Dixon for examining the caterpillar and determining which snake preyed upon it.

On 22 August 1988, one of us (JMM) witnessed the close proximity of a coachwhip and a green snake ca. 24 km upstream from the site previously described. This second site was 40 m above the FM 1929 crossing of the Concho River on the north bank. At 1200 h the coachwhip was seen foraging about 3 m above the water's edge in debris lodged in an American elm (*Ulmus americana*). The green snake lay on a live elm limb extruding from the debris ca. 2 m above the water and ca. 1.5 m from the coachwhip. To move from its limb, the green snake would have come in close proximity of the coachwhip. I (JMM) monitored the 2 snakes' activities for 3 h 30 min, during which the green snake remained motionless. The coachwhip failed to detect the green snake and moved away from it ca. 1 m. There it stopped foraging for the remainder of my observation. I believe it may have detected the green snake through chemoreception but could not determine the snake's exact location. The green snake may have survived this encounter due to its cryptic habits.

The abundance of both green snakes and coachwhips along rivers in this region coupled with the observances we have described above suggest that coachwhips may be keying in on green snakes as a prey species. As opposed to water snakes (*Nerodia* spp.) which usually drop into the river to escape danger, green snakes, once discovered, remain terrestrial or arboreal and try to survive through knotting their body around vegetation (see Hammerson 1988, Herp. Review 19(4):85). This leaves them vulnerable to predation by coachwhips.

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