

Defensive behavior of a juvenile  
*Crotalus durissus*  
LINNAEUS, 1758

On 16 February 2017, at 20:35 h, the first author observed a particular defensive behavior displayed by a juvenile Cascabel Rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus* LINNAEUS, 1758, in a Cerrado area in the Estação Ecológica de Itirapina (22.2304°S, 47.8190°W, WGS84; 783 m a.s.l.), northeastern State of São Paulo, Brazil. The rattlesnake (snout-vent-length: 640 mm; tail length: 60 mm) was found crossing a trail located at the

edge of a forest fragment. With the approach of the observer the species exhibited the behavior of dorso-ventral flattening or rather lateral spreading of the body (Fig. 1). This behavior, which is displayed to appear larger, is related to the snakes' morphological characteristics, visually oriented predators, habitat use (GREENE 1979) and phylogeny (MARTINS et al. 2008). Recently, a number of variations in the behavior of *C. durissus* were recorded, ranging from arboreal habitat use (BENÍCIO 2016) to swimming (FERRANTE et al. 2015). Body flattening is a common defensive behavior observed in various snake species of several families such as Dipsadidae (TOZETTI et al. 2009), Elapidae (MARQUES 2002) and Viperidae (ARAÚJO & MARTINS 2006). However, as to Brazil, there is only one record of *C. durissus* exhibiting this behavior of dorso-ventral flattening, and it refers to a snake which was manipulated (SAWAYA et al. 2008). Thus, this is the first record of *C. durissus* displaying this type of behavior without being handled, instead upon the approach of an observer in nature.

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Fig. 1: A juvenile *Crotalus durissus* LINNAEUS, 1758, displaying dorso-ventral flattening of the body as observed at Estação Ecológica de Itirapina, State of São Paulo, southeastern Brazil.

KEY WORDS: Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes Viperidae; *Crotalus durissus*; defensive behavior, aposematic behavior, antipredator behavior, dorso-ventral flattening, lateral spreading of the body, Brazil

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