

**Strophocheilus oblongus in the stomach of
a Surinam bird of prey**

by

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From Prof. Dr. K. H. VOOUS, Amsterdam, I received for study the contents of the crop and stomach of the Hook-billed Kite, *Chondrohierax uncinatus uncinatus* (Temminck), a bird of prey from Surinam. The bird, a female, was shot by Th. A. RENNSSEN on the evening of the 19th of August 1963 at the Plantation Peperpot, Suriname district, Surinam. It is now preserved as study skin (reg. no. 17722) in the Zoological Museum of the University of Amsterdam.

After being captured the animal was sent deep-frozen to Amsterdam, where it was prepared in the Museum. Both the crop and the stomach of the bird were found to be crammed full with bodies of snails, without shells. Among the somewhat rumpled remnants the soft parts of about 12 snails could be distinguished. In all the specimens the dorsal part of the foot was blackish, the foot sole brownish. The visceral mass was much torn and partly digested. In addition there was one fragment of a shell columella with pink margin and narrow perforation.

The bird with the captured snails in its stomach weighed 360 gram; the stomach and crop content 45.5 gram. Hence the mass of snails amounted to over one seventh of the body weight of the bird.

Presumably all these debris belonged to one species. From three specimens, one adult and two semi-adult ones, the radula could be prepared, and in one semi-adult snail I found the mandibula (fig. 1). The teeth of the radula are very uniform in shape; the rhachis can only be distinguished from the neighbour teeth by its symmetrical form.

On the evidence of the radula, the mandibula and the columella fragment the remains were identified as *Strophocheilus oblongus* (Müller, 1774), a common land snail in Surinam. Its shell can attain a height of about 10 cm.

Strophocheilus oblongus is widely distributed in tropical South America: Colombia, Venezuela, British and French Guyana, Surinam, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, and occurs also in some West Indian islands. It is frequently found in gardens or close to human habitations. The snail is strictly terrestrial and nocturnal in habit. In the morning it burrows under loose earth in protected places, for concealment from enemies and protection against the tropical sun. Only the apex of the shell protrudes more or less. It buries itself deeper for estivation during the dry season. Typical *Strophocheilus oblongus* prefers the moister conditions of gardens and the vicinity of human habitations. (BEQUAERT, 1948, p. 61 and 75). APPUN (quoted by VON MARTENS, 1873 p. 15) found the snails on banana leaves.

The Hook-billed Kite lives in the lower canopy and among dense undergrowth of forests, mostly in swampy wood and high mangroves bordering creeks (HAVERSCHMIDT, 1955, p. 36 and VOOUS, pers. comm.). HAVERSCHMIDT (1962, p. 154) found only tree snails (not further identified) in the stomachs of a few Surinam specimens of this bird.

REFERENCES

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SAMENVATTING

In de krop en de maag van een Surinaamse roofvogel, *Chondrohierax uncinnatus uncinnatus* (Temminck) werden overblijfselen gevonden van ongeveer 12 lichamen (zonder huisjes) van *Strophocheilus oblongus* (Müller), een grote landslak uit Suriname en andere tropische gedeelten van Zuid-Amerika. De determinatie van de slakken vond plaats op grond van de radula, de mandibula en een schelp-fragment, welke uit de restanten van lichamen werden uitgeprepareerd.

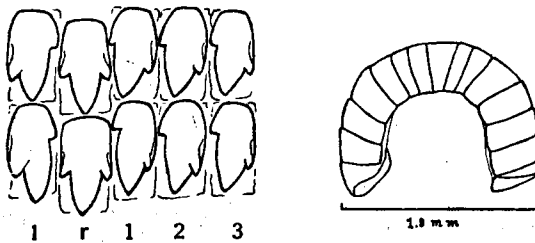


Fig. 1. Mandibula and some radula teeth of *Strophocheilus oblongus* (Müller).