

Shorter Contributions

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EASTERN BOX TURTLE (*TERRAPENE CAROLINA CAROLINA*) SCAVENGES SHORT-TAILED SHREW (*BLARINA BREVICAUDA*) IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA. – Eastern Box Turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) have a markedly catholic diet, ranging from fruit, leaves, fungi, earthworms, snails and slugs, to insects (Ernst et al., 1994; Dodd, 2001). Box turtles have also been reported to scavenge a diverse variety of carrion including small mammals, lizards, snakes, fish, and birds (Ernst et al., 1994; Dodd, 2001). We observed an adult Eastern Box Turtle scavenging a Short-tailed Shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) on 23 May 2008 in Fairfax County, Virginia (38°46.3'N, 77° 5.7'W). The turtle had torn open the abdominal cavity and pulled out the shrew's internal organs (Fig. 1). The shrew had been dead for >12 hours as evidenced by the strong odor of decomposition, the presence of several bottle flies (*Lucilia* sp.) on the carcass, and several hundred fly larvae (2-3 mm) embedded in the fur. Experimental evidence suggests that box turtles cue on movement, odor, and color to find food (Fitch, 1966). In this case, we suppose that olfaction was the primary sense used to detect the dead shrew.

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LITERATURE CITED

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Fig. 1. Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) feeding on dead Short-tailed Shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*).

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