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Gary R. Graves. Copperhead Preys on Star-nosed Mole in the Great Dismal Swamp. *Banisteria* 20: 70. (2002)

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The journal *Banisteria* is named for John Banister (1650-1692), who was the first university-trained naturalist to work in Virginia.



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COPPERHEAD PREYS ON STAR-NOSED MOLE IN THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP -- On 19 May 1989, I photographed an adult Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*; total length, 0.9-1.0 m) as it swallowed a Star-nosed Mole (*Condylura cristata*) on the graveled shoulder of Jericho Ditch Lane (36° 42.98' N, 76° 32.11' W), 2.7 km east of White Marsh Road, in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, City of Suffolk, Virginia (Fig. 1). Both species are believed to be relatively common in the Great Dismal Swamp (Handley, 1979; Mitchell et al., 2000). Habitat on either side of the elevated roadbed consisted of seasonally flooded, second-growth forest dominated by red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and swamp black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica* var. *biflora*) (Graves, 2001).

To my knowledge, the present observation represents the second record of snake predation on the Star-nosed Mole (Petersen & Yates, 1980; Mitchell, 1994). Copperheads prey on a wide variety of small mammals including the Eastern Mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*) and Hairy-tailed Mole (*Parascalops breweri*) (Conant, 1938; Uhler et al., 1939; Fitch, 1960; Gloyd & Conant, 1990), and it probably feeds on the star-nosed mole wherever the two species co-occur.

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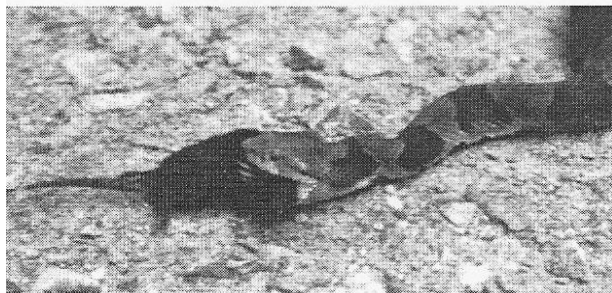


Fig. 1. Copperhead preying on Star-nosed Mole in the Great Dismal Swamp.

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