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*Trachemys ornata* (Gray, 1831). **Predation and reproduction.** The Ornate Slider, *Trachemys ornata*, is an endemic freshwater turtle that occurs in western Mexico (Legler and Vogt, 2013); its distribution ranges from Culiacán, Sinaloa, to Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco (Casas-Andreu et al., 2015; Parham et al., 2015). For some time the taxonomic status of this species was uncertain, but in a molecular study Parham et al. (2015) showed that *T. ornata* from the type region are not phylogenetically nested within *T. venusta*. To date, some studies have reported certain aspects of this species, including its cultural uses by humans (Cupul-Magaña and Mountjoy, 2012), morphology (Legler and Vogt, 2013), and feeding habits (Hernández-Macias et al., 2017). Nonetheless, other aspects such as demography, ecology and/or life history remain somewhat limited, but these are necessary to evaluate its conservation status (e.g., information on natural predators remains unavailable). Herein we report the first records of Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias* Linnaeus, 1758, the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, *Nyctanassa violacea* (Linnaeus, 1758), and the Tropical Fire Ant, *Solenopsis geminata* (Fabricius, 1804), preying on hatchlings of *T. ornata*.

*Ardea herodias* is one of the most widespread and adaptable wading birds in North America; its diet includes fishes, frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, shrimp, crabs, crayfishes, arthropods (land and aquatic), other birds, and small mammals (Terres, 1991). *Nyctanassa violacea* occurs in North America, the West Indies, and along the coasts of Central- and South America, and its opportunistic, carnivorous diet includes freshwater and shore crustaceans (crayfishes, crabs, and amphipods), amphibians (frogs), reptiles (lizards, and snakes), molluscs, annelids (leeches, earthworms, and polychaetes), centipedes, scorpions, aquatic insects, fishes, and small mammals (IUCN Heron Specialist Group, 2011). Trager (1991: 166) noted that *Solenopsis geminata*, apparently is “native from the
southeast coastal plain and Florida to Texas (lacking in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana?) south through Central America to northern South America, including the coastal areas of northern Brazil, west through the Guianas to the Orinoco Basin, the western Amazon Basin and coastal areas of Peru.” Further, Trager (1991) indicated that the populations of this fire ant in the Antilles and the Galapagos, and possibly the ones in the southeastern United States, have been introduced but have resided in these areas for several centuries, and that this species also has been introduced into both tropical Asia and Africa. In addition to foraging for insects and general scavenging, this ant also is known to harvest seeds (Risch and Carroll, 1981; Carroll and Risch, 1984).

On 28 June 2017, at Marina Vallarta Club de Golf, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico (20°40′01″N, 105°15′51″W; datum: WGS 84; elev. < 4 m), one of us (FMC) observed and photographed an adult *A. herodias*, an adult *N. violacea*, and a swarm of *S. geminata* preying on hatchlings of *T. ornata* (Fig. 1). Both of the birds captured the turtles and tossed them in the air before swallowing them, whereas the ants were feeding on a dead individual (Fig. 1). We assume that the turtles had hatched recently, because evidence of freshly hatched eggs was found in a nest near the observation site.

![Fig. 1. Individuals of *Ardea herodias* (A), *Nyctanassa violacea* (B), and a swarm of *Solenopsis geminata* (C) preying on hatchlings of *Trachemys ornata* at Marina Vallarta Club de Golf, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico. © Frank Mc Cann](image)

With regard to reproductive information, Legler and Vogt (2013) indicated that egg laying in *T. ornata* occurs in early May. In addition, during a four-year period we observed turtles at Marina Vallarta Club de Golf laying eggs from mid- to late April. Based on our observations, the nesting season could begin in April, and hatching could extend to late June or early July. Nevertheless, additional studies are needed to fully understand the reproductive and nesting ecology of *T. ornata* in modified habitats within tropical dry forest.
**Literature Cited**


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