

On the Consumption of Marshmallow Residues, an Atypical Food Item, by *Anolis cristatellus* Duméril and Bibron, 1837 in Puerto Rico¹

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Abstract: An *Anolis cristatellus* lizard is reported eating marshmallow residues. This appears to be the first such report ever of an anole eating a human-created food item.

Key Words: *Anolis cristatellus*, atypical food, marshmallows, Puerto Rico

Although anoles are generally considered insectivorous, frugivory has been observed in seventeen species (Herrel et al. 2004). Nectarivory has been noted in anoles as well, and additional research is showing that frugivory and nectarivory are part of the diet of many West Indian anoles (Losos 2009). There has even been an observation of *A. sagrei* Duméril and Bibron, 1837 consuming the sap of a banana plant (Norval and Mao 2013). Frugivory has been observed in the Puerto Rican species *Anolis stratulus* Cope, 1861; *A. gundlachi* Peters, 1877; *A. krugi* Peters, 1877; and *A. cristatellus* Duméril and Bibron, 1837 (Vega-Castillo 2014, Vega-Castillo and Cuevas 2009, Vega-Castillo and Puente-Rolón 2011) and nectivory has been observed in *A. evermanni* Stejneger, 1904 (Colón Archilla 2010). Anole frugivory is thought to play a role in seed dispersal in Puerto Rican forests (Vega-Castillo and Cuevas 2009).



Figure 1. A male *Anolis cristatellus* feeding on marshmallow residues. Estimated size of the lizard, from tip of snout to vent, ~ 7 cm.

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On March 18th, 2014, at approximately 09:00, I observed an adult male *Anolis cristatellus* eating the remains of a marshmallow that had been roasted over a campfire the night before. The remains were on the end of stick that had been discarded on an outdoor table at the homestead of Las Casas de la Selva (<http://eyeontherainforest.org/>), a sustainable forestry project in the Carite Forest region of Patillas, Puerto Rico. The anole licked the charred marshmallow residue and four times bit the end of the stick. This feeding event took place for eleven minutes, until one of the observers accidentally startled the anole.

Although no insects were observed, it is possible that the stick initially had insects feeding on the residue, and this is what attracted the anole, which continued to feed after consuming the prey items. Alternatively, it is possible that the anole intentionally sought out the marshmallow residue. I believe this is the first record of an anole consuming a human-manufactured food item.

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