

Food habits of *Zamenis longissimus* (Laurenti, 1768) (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae) in Bieszczady (south-eastern Poland)

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of research on the food contents of the Aesculapian snake *Zamenis longissimus* in Bieszczady (south-eastern Poland). Over the period of 20 years 43 dead individuals of the species of varied age were found in the valley of the San river at the foot of Otryt hills. 116 victims were recorded in 40 (93 %) stomachs filled with food contents, among which vertebrate, and in particular small mammals prevailed (e. g.

Sorex

sp.,

Apodemus

sp.,

Microtus

sp. and

Clethrionomys

sp.). Food of adult snakes (89–159.7 cm;

n

= 32) also included bird eggs. Food of individuals classified as young (27.5–67.5 cm;

n

= 8), apart from vertebrate (mainly Lacertidae) included invertebrate (Coleoptera and Oligochaeta). The research indicates that food contents of this relatively small population of the Aesculapian snake can be significantly diversified and dependent on age.

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