

# Tiny jumping spiders found preying on frogs and lizards

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Credit: *Journal of Arachnology* (2017). DOI: 10.1636/JoA-17-011.1

A trio of researchers from Switzerland and the U.S. has found

documented evidence of tiny regal jumping spiders killing and eating much larger frogs and lizards. In their paper published in *Journal of Arachnology*, Martin Nyffeler, with the University of Basel, G. B. Edwards with Florida State Collection of Arthropods and Kenneth Krysko with the University of Florida, describe their findings.

Scientists and everyday people have seen multiple examples of frogs, [lizards](#) and other creatures dining on small spiders, but more rare is when the reverse happens. In this new effort, the researchers report on evidence they have uncovered of the tiny, one-inch-long regal jumping [spider](#) killing and eating frogs and lizards that are much larger than they are. Notably, despite its tiny size, the regal is actually one of the largest of the jumping spiders.

The study began as the researchers exchanged anecdotal evidence of tiny spiders feasting on various vertebrate. Intrigued, they began conducting queries using several Google tools: Search, Books, Scholar and Pictures. They also did searches on the Scopus database and Thomson Reuters. These searches resulted in the discovery of six reports (and pictures) of tiny regal jumping spiders killing and consuming frogs and lizards. The pictures showed the one-inch spiders dining on Cuban frogs that were one to 1.5 times their own size, and lizards such as the Carolina anole that were 1.5 to 2.5 times their own size. The tiny spiders do not have to engage in battles with their prey; instead, they simply inject them with venom and then wait for them to die. The paper offers the first documented case of jumping spiders killing and eating vertebrates.

The researchers note that regal jumping spiders, which live in Florida, belong to a group known as generalist predators. They do not have a primary food source. Instead, they are opportunists, killing whatever happens to cross their path. Prior research has already shown that the spiders have excellent eyesight, allowing them to spot prey and assess the chances of being able to kill and eat it before they take action.

**More information:** Martin Nyffeler et al. A vertebrate-eating jumping spider (Araneae: Salticidae) from Florida, USA, *Journal of Arachnology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1636/JoA-17-011.1](https://doi.org/10.1636/JoA-17-011.1)

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