

Natural History Notes

ANOLIS CAROLINESIS (Green Anole). WINTER ACTIVITY. Winter activity of the green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) has been described for Tennessee populations in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of East Tennessee (Bishop and Echternacht 2003. *Copeia* 4: 906-909; Bishop and Echternacht 2004. *Herpetologica* 60: 168-177). Individuals emerge from overwintering crevices in south-facing rock bluffs to bask on sunny winter days (Bishop and Echternacht 2003. *op. cit.*; Bishop and Echternacht 2004. *op. cit.*). This population of *A. carolinensis* utilized the rock bluff from late October / early November through late March / early April (Bishop and Echternacht 2004. *op. cit.*). Infrequent feeding was observed for *A. carolinensis* during the winter months in East Tennessee and both male and female individuals experienced significant growth in snout vent length (SVL) (Bishop and Echternacht 2003. *op. cit.*). Additional Tennessee populations occur on the Cumberland Plateau escarpment along

the eastern edge of the Sequatchie Valley ca. 100 km east of the Blue Ridge populations (Scott and Redmond 2008. *Atlas of Reptiles in Tennessee*. <https://www.apsubiology.org/tnamphibianatlas/>; accessed 1 January 2024; Brais 2021. *Herpetol. Rev.* 52: 82-83). The winter activity of Tennessee *A. carolinensis* outside of the Blue Ridge ecoregion has been poorly documented.

An *A. carolinensis* population is known from a southeast facing, steep rock cut within the right of way of Big Spring Gap Rd on the Cumberland Plateau escarpment, along the eastern edge of the Sequatchie Valley, Bledsoe County, Tennessee (35.704933 °N, 85.12236 °W, WGS 84, 433 m elev.). This site is ca. 21 km north of the northernmost previously described *A. carolinensis* record from the Cumberland Plateau escarpment of the Sequatchie Valley (Brais 2021. *op. cit.*).



Figure 1. Winter basking *Anolis carolinensis* on woody vegetation of the Cumberland Plateau escarpment of Tennessee.

I visited this location on 26 December 2020 between 1100 and 1200 h during clear, sunny conditions and found four basking *A. carolinensis*. I documented these individuals basking on the face of the rock cut and on woody vegetation adjacent to the rock cut (Fig. 1). High and low temperatures observed for 26 December 2020 from the Pikeville USC00407184 National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather station located 13.5 km southwest of the Big Spring Gap Rd site were 5.5 & -11 degrees Celsius respectively. Daily high and low temperatures are provided as part of the NOAA Daily Global Historical Climatology Network dataset (Menne et al. 2012. J. Atmos. Ocean. Tech. 29:897-910) accessed on 22 March 2024. This winter activity for Cumberland Plateau escarpment *A. carolinensis* is similar to previously studied *A. carolinensis* in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains, where individuals emerge to bask on sunny winter days along south-facing rocky refugia (Bishop and Echternacht 2003. *op. cit.*; Bishop and Echternacht 2004. *op. cit.*). The late December basking activity of *A. carolinensis* at the Big Spring Gap Rd site is within the November through March activity reported in the Blue Ridge foothills population (Bishop and Echternacht 2003. *op. cit.*; Bishop and Echternacht 2004. *op. cit.*). Additional populations of *A. carolinensis* are known from the Cumberland Plateau escarpment along the eastern edge of Walden's Ridge in East Tennessee (Scott and Redmond 2008 *op. cit.*). Further study is needed to better describe Walden's Ridge *A. carolinensis* winter behavior.

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