SCP-9063 – Cannibal Lizards

By Cameron Tobin

Good morning, and welcome to the team. I'm Doctor O'Conner, acting lead researcher of SCP-9063. You have been assigned by Foundation admin to investigate the source of SCP-9063-1 instances. You have been granted full access to SCP-9063's file, and your flight to Site 9063 is scheduled for tomorrow at 0800 UDT. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Item #: SCP-9063

Object Class: Euclid

Special Containment Procedures: All instances of SCP-9063 are to be contained within the bounds of Site 9063, located on the Greek island of Siros. Instances of SCP-9063 are not to be removed from Site 9063 under any circumstances. Instances of SCP-9063 found beyond the island's perimeter are to be captured and returned to Site 9063 or euthanized when the former is not possible. Individuals in possession of SCP-9063 instances are to be administered amnestics following the containment of said instances.

Conditions of SCP-9063 populations and the ecosystem of Site 9063 are to be monitored regularly. Any instances of SCP-9063-1 are to be documented with the appropriate standard procedure form, 9063-IR7, and reported to the acting lead researcher of SCP-9063, Doctor O'Conner. Videography and/or photography should accompany this report whenever possible.

Description: SCP-9063 is a subspecies of Aegean Wall Lizard, *Podarcis erhardii mykonensism*, native to Site 9063. SCP-9063 has a snout-vent-length of 49.78 mm,[3] with tails approximately twice as long. SCP-9063 has gray, green, and/or brown skin of varying patterns, with red or orange underbellies. SCP-9063 feeds primarily on insects, expanding its diet to local vegetation when necessary.[3]

SCP-9063 instances that engage in cannibalistic behaviors are referred to as SCP-9063-1. At this time, cannibalism within SCP-9063 populations is unexplained, and is considered anomalous activity until research suggests otherwise.

Incident Report SCP-9063-01: The following is an excerpt from a report published by Foundation researchers Madden and Brock in *Herpetology Notes* on 4/17/2018.[3] This is the first recorded direct observation of an SCP-9063-1 instance.

[...] During a herpetological expedition on 6/9/2017 on the Greek Cycladic island of Siros, Madden witnessed a large adult male P. erhardii mykonensis feasting on a deceased conspecific adult male. Upon closer inspection, the cannibal was observed to have a severed upper half of another adult P. e. mykonensis in its mouth. The dead lizard was missing its posterior half from just behind the forearms to the tail, the cause of which [DATA EXPUNGED]. *Madden photographed the event, as well as recorded a 1-minute video of the lizard as it began to run away, with the dead lizard torso and head still in its mouth. The cannibal continuously ran along the top of a wall and paused intermittently to thrash the corpse against the cement. After 2 minutes, the cannibal lizard escaped our view by jumping into thick herbaceous vegetation off the back side of the wall, with the severed anterior of its prey still clutched in its mouth. [...]* [3]

Following the first observation of an SCP-9063-1 instance, the Foundation designated the perimeter of the island of Siros as Site 9063 and assigned a team of Foundation cleared herpetologists to investigate the populations of SCP-9063 further.

Addendum 9063.A: The following is an email by research assistant Langley to doctor [redacted], former lead researcher for SCP-9063.

To: Doctor [redacted] [redacted] <[redacted]>

Subject: Concerns about 9063

Doctor [redacted],

I read the file on SCP-9063 and I can't help but think this is just mundane. Is 9063 really anomalous? I mean there's all kinds of animals that engage in cannibalism like 9063-1 instances do. There's praying mantises, frog tadpoles, and even African lions just to name a few. [2] *It's common enough in nature to considered explainable, right?*

Is something missing from the file that I don't have clearance for?

- Langley

Doctor [redacted] forwarded Langley's concerns to Site Director [redacted], requesting additional information on SCP-9063, if available. Their request was denied, and Doctor [redacted] was advised to continue research on SPC-9063 as assigned.

Addendum 9063.B: The following is a recording of a presentation by doctors Nishimura and Isoda discussing their study of cannibalism as an evolutionary endpoint and its implications for SCP-9063-1 research.

<Begin Log>

Nishimura: Greetings everyone, I'm doctor Nishimura.

Isoda: I am [redacted] Isoda.

Nishimura: As you are aware, we believe our study is relevant to the research of SCP-9063-1 instances. To start, we know that cannibalism can be advantageous when there is overcrowding of conspecifics in a population or when resources are sparse. However, population data of SCP-9063 suggest against overcrowding as a theory, and there is a high availability of invertebrates from surrounding human settlements located within the boundaries of Site 9063.[3]

Isoda: Because of these factors, we considered whether SCP-9063 instances could have evolved to have cannibalism as one of its foraging mechanisms. We performed a variety of simulations of populations with varying characteristics and degrees of cannibalism within those populations…

[Data Omitted for Brevity]

Nishimura: Our simulated data showed that cannibalism is a Nash equilibrium state with respect to survival in intraspecific encounters. Generally, an increase in cannibalism among members of a population decreases the expected survival of all members. However, the expected survival of a cannibal remains higher than that of a non-cannibal. This suggests that cannibalism is a unique evolutionary endpoint when no other factors, such as overcrowding or resource scarcity, are present.[4]

Isoda: We believe that our findings could apply to SCP-9063-1 instances, suggesting that they are, in fact, not anomalous whatsoever. Thus, instances of SCP-9063-1 are perfectly explainable. Because of this we would like to request reclassification of SCP-9063 from Euclid to explained, as well as suspend the present special containment procedures for SCP-9063.

<End Log>

Their request was denied, though doctors Nishimura and Isoda were graciously thanked for their contributions to the study of SCP-9063.

Addendum 9063.C: The following is a request by Foundation researchers Madden and Brock for reclassification of SCP-9063.

Site Director [redacted],

With all due respect, we believe the classification of SCP-9063 as an anomalous object is a complete and utter mistake, and a waste of Foundation resources. There is no evidence to suggest that the cannibalistic behaviors we directly observed in P. erhardii mykonensis populations are irregular within context.

To start, there are numerous other island populations of P. erhardii that exhibit cannibalistic properties, such as ovophagy and tail biting.

Additionally, other species within the genus Podarcis, such as P. gaigeae, P. muralis, P. hispanica, P. lilfordi, and P. pityusensi, are known to attack and consume adult tails and whole juveniles of the same species.

This is not irregular behavior. This is not anomalous, even if the root cause is unknown. We should reclassify SCP-9063 as explained, as our many colleagues have recommended prior.

Sincerely,
Researchers [redacted] *Madden and* [redacted] *Brock*

Their request was denied.

Figures:

1. SCP-9063 instance in containment[1]

2. Adult male SCP-9063-1 instance consuming the dismembered head and shoulders of an adult male SCP-9063 instance. This SCP-9063-1 instance was observed in Incident Report SCP-9063-01.[3]

Citations:

1. Alvarez, Jason. "Students Discover Cannibal Lizards on Remote Aegean Island." *UC Merced Newsroom*, 2018. https://news.ucmerced.edu/news/2018/students-discover-cannibal-lizards-remote-aegean-island
2. Langley, Liz. "Cannibalism in animals is more common than you think." *National Geographic*, Jan. 2023. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/cannibalism-common-leopards-fish-invertebrates
3. Madden, Indiana and Brock, Kinsey M. "An extreme record of cannibalism in *Podarcis erhardii mykonensism* (Reptilia: Lacertidae) from Siros Island, Cyclades, Greece." *Herpetology Notes*, volume 11, 2018, pgs. 291-292. https://www.biotaxa.org/hn/article/view/33391/32741
4. Nishimura, Kinya and Isoda, Yutaka. "Evolution of cannibalism: referring to costs of cannibalism." *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, Volume 226, Issue 3, 2004, pgs. 293-302. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022519303003370?via%3Dihub