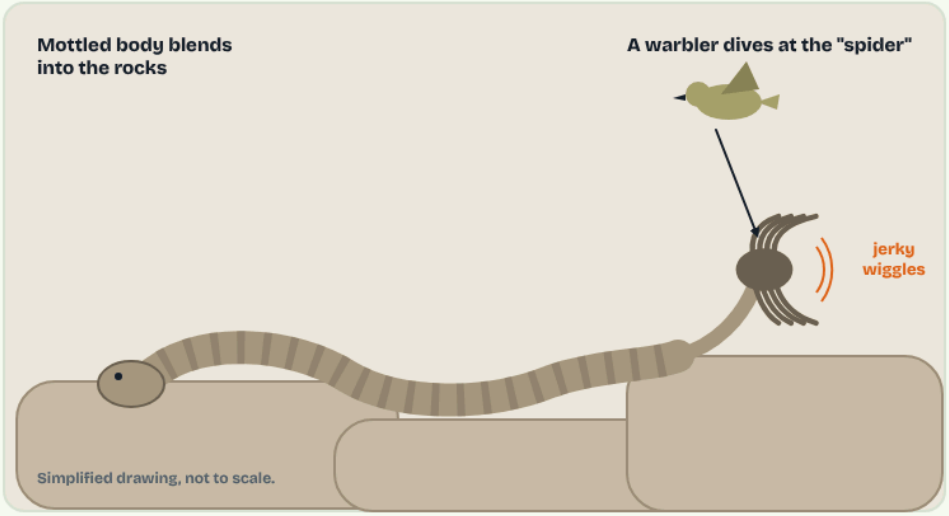
That is why

How does the spider-tailed viper lure birds?

Its tail tip is a fake spider made of skin and scales. It wiggles the bait, and strikes when a bird pecks.

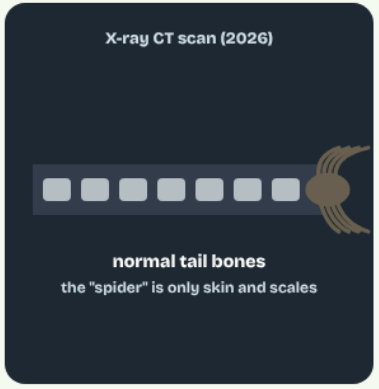
A The ambush



Strike: 0.2 seconds

When the bird pecks at the lure, the hidden head strikes in just 0.2 seconds.
The lure: a fleshy bulb with long, leg-like scales that stand up during the ambush.

B Inside the "spider"



1 Ordinary inside

Its tail bones are typical of most vipers.

2 Unlike a rattle

A rattlesnake's tail bones are fused together.

C Who falls for it

1 Migrant birds

Adults caught only migratory birds, mostly warblers.

2 Locals know

No local birds were caught at all.

3 Young snakes

Lure not ready yet: they catch lizards.

1968: first specimen, thought a tumor. 2006: named a new species. 2026: CT scan of the tail.

A rock with a fake spider on its tail, and a 0.2-second strike.

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