The false carmine cochineal, *Dactylopius opuntiae* (Cockerell) (Hemiptera: Dactylopiidae), has become a severe pest of the cactus *Opuntia ficus-indica* (L.) Mill (Cactaceae) in the Brazilian semiarid region over the past two decades. The first outbreak of this hemipteran occurred in 2001 in Sertânia County, Pernambuco (Lopes 2007). Since then, the pest has been found in nearly the entire region where *O. ficus-indica* is grown, causing an estimated loss of one-fifth of its cultivated area, which was once the largest in the world (ca. 500,000 ha; Santos et al. 2006; Lopes 2007). The cactus is the main forage for cattle farming among the small producers from the semiarid region (Duque 1964).

Several actions have been proposed to control *D. opuntiae*, but no progress has ever been reported in the literature. Recommendations for chemical control have been proposed (Brito et al. 2008), but the scarcity of water in the region prevents this measure from being a viable option (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia-INPA, staff personal communication), in addition to other barriers such as cost and contamination of fresh forage (Torres and Giorgi 2018).

At least two natural enemies of *D. opuntiae* from Mexico (the natural origin of the false carmine cochineal), *Chilocorus cacti* (Linnaeus) and *Hyperaspis trifurcata* Schaefer, were considered for biological control purposes (Lima 2007), but no introductions occurred. Originally brought for other purposes, the predatory efficiency of the Australian *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* Mulsant on *D. opuntiae* was evaluated in the laboratory (Gama et al. 2016). Despite high rates of prey consumption, the beetle failed to establish a population in the field (Torres and Giorgi 2018).

Surprisingly, little is known about the semiarid native predators of *D. opuntia*. Lopes (2007) reported *Cycloneda sanguinea* (Linnaeus) and a species of *Scymnus* Kugelann as natural enemies of the false carmine cochineal. However, *C. sanguinea* is a well-known aphid feeder and is probably not the species the author intended to report, as the coccinellid featured in the publication (fig. 10) is clearly *Zagreus bimaculosus* Mulsant.

A more comprehensive survey was carried out by Lima et al. (2011), who surveyed 15 counties in...