



## A new non-sexually dichromatic species of the genus *Gonatodes* (Sauria: Sphaerodactylidae) from Sierra de Perijá, Venezuela

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### Abstract

A new species of diurnal gecko of the genus *Gonatodes* is described from Sierra de Perijá in western Venezuela. The new species is the only member of the genus lacking sexual dichromatism, and can be readily distinguished from all congeners by the unique combination of the following characters: medium body size; supraciliary spine absent; dorsolateral light spots coinciding with clusters of enlarged, conical to spinelike scales; males with escutcheon area on belly and undersurface of thighs; unique subcaudal scale pattern (1'2'' followed by 1'1''); and both sexes with cryptic dorsal color pattern. The new species increases the number of *Gonatodes* known from Venezuela to 17.

**Key words:** *Gonatodes*, Sphaerodactylidae, Andes, Perijá, Zulia, Venezuela

### Resumen

Se describe una nueva especie de gecko diurno del género *Gonatodes* con base en ejemplares provenientes de la Sierra de Perijá en el occidente de Venezuela. La nueva especie es la única del género que no exhibe dicromatismo sexual, y puede ser diferenciada fácilmente de sus congéneres por la combinación única de los siguientes caracteres: tamaño corporal mediano; espina supraciliar ausente; manchas claras dorsolaterales coincidentes con grupos de escamas agrandadas y cónicas a espiniformes; machos con área de escudo en el vientre y superficie ventral de los muslos; patrón único de escamas subcaudales (1'2'' seguido de 1'1''); y ambos sexos con patrón de coloración dorsal críptico. Con esta nueva especie el número de *Gonatodes* en Venezuela asciende a 17.

### Introduction

The Neotropical genus *Gonatodes* Fitzinger is composed mainly of diurnal, relatively small lizards, with round pupils [the only exception being the nocturnal species *G. antillensis* (Lidth de Jeude)], and strong sexual dichromatism, such that males are usually conspicuously ornamented with bright colors whereas females are cryptically colored. This genus contains 23 currently recognized species (Barrio-Amorós & Brewer-Carías 2008, Cole & Kok 2006, Esqueda 2004, Powell & Henderson 2005, Rivas & Schargel 2008, Rivero-Blanco 1979, Schargel *et al.* 2010), distributed from Central America to central South America, and on many Caribbean islands (Avila-Pires 1995, Powell & Henderson 2005, Rivero-Blanco 1979). Venezuela harbors the highest species richness, with 16 species of *Gonatodes* (Barrio-Amorós & Brewer-Carías 2008, Esqueda 2004, Rivas & Schargel 2008, Schargel *et al.* 2010), seven of which are endemic to this country. Additionally, at least four other new species have been mentioned but remain undescribed (Rivero-Blanco 1979, Vilorio & Calchi 1993).

The Sierra de Perijá is the northernmost spur of the Andean range, and forms a natural boundary between Venezuela and Colombia. This region historically has been little explored and its fauna is still poorly known.