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A new species of *Leposternon* Wagler, 1824 (Squamata, Amphisbaenia) from northeastern Argentina

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Abstract

A new species of *Leposternon* is described from the Humid Chaco biome in Argentina. The species is known only from its type locality, at El Bagual Ecological Reserve, a conservation unit located in the province of Formosa. The new species can be distinguished from all its congeners by the presence of rostral processes in the maxillae and nasals that contact each other on the facial portion of the skull. Additionally, we present a key for the species of *Leposternon*.

Key words: Amphisbaenian, *Leposternon bagual* sp. nov., taxonomy, skull, Humid Chaco

Resumo

Uma nova espécie de *Leposternon* é descrita para bioma Chaco úmido na Argentina. A nova espécie é conhecida para a localidade tipo Reserva Ecológica de El Bagual, uma unidade de conservação localizada na província de Formosa, na porção nordeste do país. A nova espécie pode ser distinguida dos congêneres, principalmente, pela presença dos processos rostrais da maxila e nasais em contato na porção facial do crânio. Adicionalmente, apresentamos uma chave para espécies de *Leposternon*.

Palavras chave: Anfisbênios, *Leposternon bagual* sp. nov., taxonomia, Crânio, Chaco úmido

Introduction

The genus *Leposternon* Wagler, 1824 is represented by nine species distributed in South America, east of the Andes, from the Brazilian Amazon to the Pampas region in Argentina (Perez & Ribeiro 2008; Ribeiro *et al.* 2008; Ribeiro *et al.* 2011). Species belonging to this genus are well adapted to a fossorial life style, all sharing an elongated and relatively broad body, a frontally depressed head with nostrils opening on the ventral portion of the snout, no nasal shield or segmental cover on the gular portion, more than two dermal annuli per vertebrae, and a relatively short tail (Ribeiro *et al.* 2011).

Leposternon was recently synonymized with *Amphisbaena* Linné, 1758 by Mott and Vieites (2009). However, this taxonomic arrangement is still controversial and was not accepted by Ribeiro *et al.* (2011). We here follow the latter authors and consider *Leposternon* a valid genus.

Thirteen amphisbaenian species are known to occur in Argentina, *Leposternon microcephalum* Wagler, 1824 being the only representative of this genus in the country (Montero 1996; Montero & Céspedes 2002). *Leposternon microcephalum* has a widespread distribution, occurring in Argentina from the province of Salta, along the Bolivian border, to the province of Entre Rios, on the Uruguayan border (Gans 1971; Perez & Ribeiro 2008).