



A new species of *Liolaemus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Liolaemini) from southern Mendoza province, Argentina

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Abstract

A new species of lizard of the genus *Liolaemus* from southern Mendoza Province, western Argentina, is described. The new species is a member of the *Liolaemus donosobarrosi* group, and molecular data show it as sister taxon of *L. josei* differing in size, squamation, coloration, and sexual dimorphism. *Liolaemus* sp. nov. is terrestrial, dwelling on sandy soil in a shrubby piedmont of small hills, and seems to have low population density.

Key words: Argentina, Iguanidae, Liolaemini, *Liolaemus puelche* sp. nov., Mendoza province, new species, northern Patagonia

Resumen

Una nueva especie de lagartija del género *Liolaemus* del sur de la Provincia de Mendoza, oeste de Argentina, es descrita. La nueva especie es un miembro del grupo *Liolaemus donosobarrosi*, y datos moleculares la muestran como el taxón hermano de *L. josei*, diferenciándose en tamaño, escamación, coloración y en dimorfismo sexual. *Liolaemus* sp. nov. es terrestre, vive en suelo arenoso en un piedemonte arbustivo de colinas bajas, y parece tener baja densidad poblacional.

Palabras claves: Argentina, Iguanidae, Liolaemini, *Liolaemus puelche* sp. nov., Provincia de Mendoza, nueva especie, Patagonia norte

Introduction

The lizard fauna of northwestern Patagonia and adjacent areas is poorly known despite extensive field work over the last four decades. In the 1970s and 1980s several new species were described, all with restricted distributions or locally endemic to this region (e.g. *Liolaemus austromendocinus* Cei; *L. donosobarrosi* (Cei); *L. duellmani* Cei; *L. rabinoi* (Cei); *Phymaturus payunia* (Cei and Castro); *P. nevadoi* (Cei and Roig)). In the last ten years new field surveys in southern Mendoza and northern Neuquén provinces revealed additional new species of *Liolaemus* and *Phymaturus* (*L. thermarum*, Videla and Cei 1996; *L. grosseorum*, Etheridge 2001; *L. gununakuna* Avila et al. 2004; *L. flavipiceus* Cei and Videla 2003; *L. josei* Abdala 2005; *Phymaturus verdugo* Cei and Videla, 2003; *Phymaturus dorsimaculatus* Lobo and Quinteros, 2005). Further, other species of liz-