



A new species of the *Liolaemus darwini* group (Iguania: Liolaemidae) from Salta Province, Argentina

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Abstract

We describe a new species of the iguanian genus *Liolaemus* of Northwestern Argentina in Salta Province. This new lizard is a member of the *L. boulengeri* group, and within this group it is a member of the *L. darwini* subgroup. With the addition of the species described here, the *L. darwini* group now contains 19 species. Like most of the members of this group, the new taxon exhibits sexual dichromatism, showing a unique color pattern in males and females. The color pattern is characterized by the presence of a pre-scapular spot and lateral black stripes, unique within the *L. darwini* group. *Liolaemus diaguita sp nov* inhabits a region where bushes are the predominant vegetation, in Quebrada de Las Conchas, in Guachipas Department, Salta Province, which has an elevation between 1200–2500 m.

Key words: Argentina, Salta, *Liolaemus*, *L. darwini* group, new species

Resumen

Describimos una nueva especie del género *Liolaemus* para el noroeste de Argentina en la provincia de Salta. Este nuevo lagarto pertenece al grupo de *L. boulengeri*, y dentro de éste, al grupo de *L. darwini*, con lo cual este grupo quedaría conformado hasta el momento por 19 especies. Al igual que la mayoría de los integrantes de este grupo, este nuevo taxón presenta dicromatismo sexual evidente y el patrón de coloración tanto de machos como hembras es particular, caracterizado por la presencia de una mancha pre-escapular y bandas laterales negras, únicas entre las especies del grupo de *L. darwini*. *Liolaemus diaguita sp nov* habita en una región predominada por arbustos en la Quebrada de las Conchas, en el departamento de Guachipas de la Provincia de Salta, en una altura entre los 1200 y 2500 m.s.n.m.

Introduction

As a consequence of numerous geological events, e. g. the formation of the Cordillera de Los Andes and the Pre-Andean Mountains, the genus *Liolaemus* has undergone much fragmentation and isolation of its populations. These events resulted in many depressions and elevations which facilitated speciation events in the genus. With the addition of this new species *Liolaemus* now contains by 223 species (Lobo *et al.*, 2010), being the second largest genus within Iguania, after *Anolis*.

Many studies of the taxonomy and phylogenetic relationships within *Liolaemus* have resulted in the proposals of species groups and subgroups. The two species groups have been recognized as subgenera, *Liolaemus (sensu stricto)* and *Eulaemus* (Laurent, 1983; 1985; 1995; Schulte *et al.*, 2000; Espinoza *et al.*, 2004). Within *Eulaemus* several subgroups have been recognized: the *L. lineomaculatus* group, the *L. boulengeri* group, and the *L. montanus* group (See Lobo *et al.*, 2010 for a summary).