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## On the distribution and conservation of the South American lizard genus *Tropidurus* Wied-Neuwied, 1825 (Squamata: Tropiduridae)

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### Abstract

This study describes and analyzes the distribution of the lizard genus *Tropidurus* based on an updated database and the current taxonomy. General distributional patterns and endemism are identified, the distributions of several species are expanded and previous failures in the determination of specific names are corrected. I provide distributional maps for all species currently assigned to *Tropidurus* including all occurrence records collected and critical comments on the patterns documented and conservation.

**Key words:** Endemism, South America, Tropidurinae, Zoogeography

### Resumo

Este estudo descreve e analisa a distribuição do gênero de lagartos *Tropidurus* empregando uma base de dados atualizada e a taxonomia corrente. Padrões gerais de distribuição e endemismos foram identificados, a distribuição de várias espécies foi expandida e falhas anteriores na determinação de nomes específicos foram corrigidas. Mapas distribucionais incluindo todos os registros distribucionais levantados e comentários críticos sobre os padrões documentados e conservação são apresentados para as espécies atualmente associadas ao gênero *Tropidurus*.

**Palavras-chave:** Endemismo, América do Sul, Tropidurinae, Zoogeografia

### Introduction

Lizards with continental cis and trans-Andean distribution were traditionally assigned to the genus *Tropidurus* Wied-Neuwied, 1825 (Frost 1992). Frost *et al.* (2001) relocated species with exclusive trans-Andean distribution to the genus *Microlophus* Duméril and Bibron, 1837. *Plica* Gray, 1831, *Strobilurus* Wiegmann, 1834, and *Uracentron* Kaup, 1826 were resurrected, and a new genus, *Eurolophosaurus* Frost, Rodrigues, Grant and Titus 2001, was proposed. These changes severely affected the taxonomic delimitation of *Tropidurus*, resulting in species with exclusive cis-Andean distribution being assigned to the genus.

*Tropidurus* is one of the most characteristic lizard groups occupying open environments in South America (Frost 1992; Frost *et al.* 2001), but it was not until the early 1980s that the species diversity of the genus began to be uncovered. Between 1982 and 1998, 15 species were described (Ceia 1982; Rodrigues 1984, 1987; Rodrigues *et al.* 1988; Manzani & Abe 1990; Alvarez *et al.* 1994; Harvey & Gutberlet 1998), and a new species was published recently, bringing the total number of species to 23 (Passos *et al.* 2011). The genus is distributed over open tropical and subtropical habitats, predominantly along the arid South American diagonal, in Amazonian savanna enclaves, and in a large area of the Brazilian Atlantic coast (Rodrigues 1987, 1988; Ávila-Pires 1995; Harvey & Gutberlet 1998). The sedentary nature of these lizards and behavior usually associated with rocky outcrops or sandy soils (Rodrigues 1987; Kohlsdorf *et al.* 2001) shape aggregated distributions and, consequently, the high local abundance of some widely distributed species results in large numbers of individuals preserved in scientific collections.