



A new microendemic species of *Tropidurus* (Squamata: Tropiduridae) from southern Brazil and revalidation of *Tropidurus catalanensis* Gudynas & Skuk, 1983

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Abstract

The South American and cis-andean lizard genus *Tropidurus* has a complex taxonomic history. Most species were recently described and previous revisions included few specimens from the southern part of the continent. *Tropidurus torquatus* has the broadest geographic distribution in the genus and several morphological and ecological differences were described within its distribution. We analyzed the geographic variation in external morphological characters of *Tropidurus torquatus*, including large number of samples from southern Brazil. *Tropidurus catalanensis* is revalidated and *Tropidurus imbituba* sp. nov., with a restrict distribution in the southern coast of Brazil, is described. The new species is distinguished from *Tropidurus catalanensis* by the number of dorsal scales. It can be distinguished from *T. catalanensis* and *T. torquatus* by a distinct orange ventral coloration in adults, which can reach the lateral portion of the body in adult males. Our analysis also suggests that at least two other undescribed species could be recognized under the name *Tropidurus torquatus* in southeastern and central Brazil.

Key words: *Tropidurus torquatus*, Brazilian coast, La Plata Basin, Pampa, *Tropidurus imbituba* sp. nov.

Introduction

Among the lizard genus *Tropidurus* Wied-Neuwied, 1825, the *torquatus* group is characterized by lacking an enlarged middorsal scale row, imbricate and keeled dorsal scales and in not being extremely flattened. Lizards in this group are heliothermic, abundant, and broadly distributed along most of the open formations of South America east of the Andes, from Venezuela to northern Argentina and Uruguay (Rodrigues 1987; Frost *et al.* 2001).

Tropidurus torquatus (Wied-Neuwied, 1820) has a complex taxonomic history summarized in Rodrigues (1987) and Frost (1992). Its original description doesn't mention type specimens or locality, but according to Wied's itinerary it can be stated that his descriptions were based on specimens from eastern Brazil (see Rodrigues 1987). Burt and Burt (1930, 1931) synonymized *T. hispidus* (Spix, 1825) and *T. hygomi* (Reinhardt & Lütken, 1861) with *T. torquatus*. This taxonomy remained until Vanzolini and Gomes (1979) recognized *T. hygomi* as a valid species, although Etheridge (1970) had also considered both *T. hygomi* and *T. hispidus* as valid species without justification.

Tropidurus etheridgei Cei, 1982 was described from the arid Chacoan of western Argentina. In the original description, the author stated that “prior to the work of Burt and Burt (1930) it had long been believed that there were two widespread species – *Tropidurus hispidus* (Spix, 1825) with large body scales (54–94 around midbody) in northern and northeastern South America, and a small-scaled species (90–140 around midbody), *T. torquatus* (Wied, 1820) in eastern and southern Brasil” (Cei 1982, page 6). He argued that by having intermediate scale counts between *T. hispidus* and *T. torquatus*, specimens of his new species had lead Burt and Burt (1930) to recognize these taxa as subspecies. Cei also stated that “the small-scaled populations in northeastern Argentina, Paraguay and southern and eastern Brazil, formerly all included under the name *torquatus*, now appear to involve more than one taxon – *torquatus*, restricted to the eastern coast of Brazil north of Rio de Janeiro, and an unnamed taxon in the