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## A new species of *Homonota* (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkota: Phyllodactylidae) endemic to the hills of Paraje Tres Cerros, Corrientes Province, Argentina

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### Abstract

The genus *Homonota* comprises nine South American species of terrestrial and nocturnal lizards. *Homonota* lizards lack the femoral pores typical of other South American Phyllodactylidae, and their infradigital lamellas are not expanded. We here describe a new species, *Homonota taragui* sp. nov., exclusively found on a small group of three hills up to 179 meters above sea level in central eastern Corrientes Province, Argentina. The new species differs from other *Homonota* species by a combination of characters, including: a well-marked dorsal, reticulate, dark pattern contrasting with a lighter colored background; small, star-shaped chromatophores on the abdomen; the post-orbital region of the head covered by granular scales; the dorsal and anterior regions of the thighs covered by keeled scales interspersed with cycloid scales; and the internasal scale in contact with rostral scales. The conservation status of *Homonota taragui* sp. nov. may be vulnerable, due to its localized endemism with populations on three small hills surrounded by intense agricultural and livestock activity. Two endemic plant species are known from these hills, and this new lizard represents the first endemic animal species.

**Key words:** *Homonota taragui* sp. nov., sky island, small hills, taxonomy

### Introduction

The family Phyllodactylidae consists of geckos of trans-Atlantic distribution, with representatives distributed in the New World and in the Iberian Peninsula, Near East, and northern Africa (Gamble *et al.*, 2011). In South America, the family is represented by the genera *Bogertia*, *Garthia*, *Gymnodactylus*, *Homonota*, *Phyllodactylus*, *Phyllopezus*, and *Thecadactylus*. *Homonota* is distinguished from other South American Phyllodactylidae genera by having a depressed body, small cephalic scales, infradigital lamellas without expansions, and lacking femoral pores (Ceï, 1993; Abdala, 1998; Carreira, 2005; Daza *et al.*, 2009). *Homonota* is supported as monophyletic by morphological analyses and molecular phylogenetics (Abdala & Moro, 1996; Abdala, 1998; Gamble *et al.*, 2011). The genus *Garthia* has been included within *Homonota* (Kluge, 1965; 2001); but, recent molecular work inferred *Garthia* as sister to a clade consisting of *Homonota* + *Phyllodactylus* (Gamble *et al.*, 2011). The taxonomic identity of *Garthia* was also supported by morphology (Abdala & Moro, 1996; Abdala, 1998). The recent phylogeny of Pyron *et al.* (2013) recovered the same relationships indentified by Gamble *et al.*, (2011), but they considered *Garthia gaudichaudii* as *Homonota gaudichaudii*.

The genus *Homonota* currently consists of nine species of terrestrial and nocturnal lizards distributed in South America (Kluge, 1964; Ceï, 1993; Abdala, 1998; Avila *et al.*, 2012). Most species occur in Argentina, such as *H. andicola*, *H. darwinii*, *H. whitii*, *H. underwoodi*, *H. fasciata*, *H. borellii*, and *H. williamsii*. One species, *H. rupicola*, occurs in Paraguay, (Cacciali *et al.*, 2007), and another one, *H. uruguayensis*, in Uruguay and Brazil (Vaz-Ferreira & Sierra de Soriano, 1961). The species distributed in Argentina are found in 20 of the 23 provinces, including Corrientes (Abdala *et al.*, 2012).