

## A new species of *Mabuya* (Squamata, Scincidae) from the Venezuelan Andes

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### Abstract

*Mabuya meridensis* sp. nov. is described from the Cordillera de Mérida, Venezuelan Andes. This species differs from all other *Mabuya* species by the combined presence of seven dark and four whitish longitudinal stripes, paired frontoparietals, and forelimbs touching hindlimbs when adpressed against body. *Mabuya meridensis* is the second species of *Mabuya* to be described from the Andes. The only other species described from the Andes is *M. cochabambae*, native to the Inner-Andean dry valley of central Bolivia. With addition of the new species, five species of *Mabuya* are now known to occur in Venezuela (*M. carvalhoi*, *M. croizati*, *M. falconensis*, *M. meridensis*, and *M. nigropunctata*).

**Key words:** Andes, herpetofauna, *Mabuya meridensis*, new species, Scincidae, Venezuela

### Introduction

The herpetofauna of the Venezuelan Andes is considered depauperate when compared to that of the Andean ranges of Colombia and Ecuador (Duellman 1979). Duellman (1979) suggested several factors to explain this disparity in diversity between neighboring Andean mountain ranges in this region; these include barriers to dispersal and the recent elevation of the Venezuelan Andes combined with late Pleistocene glaciation. Additionally, the Venezuelan Andes are poorly explored herpetologically which may explain the seemingly low diversity of this region. However, in recent years work in this region has increased substantially as a result of the independent and collective efforts of some