

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

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Abstract

We provide the description for a new species from Catamarca province, Argentina that belongs to the *Liolaemus darwini* group. The new species was previously considered as a population of *L. ornatus*, but it can be distinguished from that species mainly because of differences on coloration pattern, and its geographic distribution, which is disjunct from the populations of *L. ornatus*. The new species is characterized for having males with a dorsal background coloration of light brown to ferrous red, the head darker than the rest of the body, paravertebral markings rounded and never in contact, dorsolateral strips lightly marked, small dark brown spots on the throat, and a belly that is white or light red.

Key words: *Liolaemus*, *L. darwini* group, *L. ornatus*, Catamarca, Argentina

Introduction

The genus *Liolaemus* is a particularly diverse group of iguanian lizards, with approximately 200 species described to date, and more awaiting description (Etheridge and Espinoza, 2000). Within this genus Etheridge (1995) proposed the *boulengeri* group based on the presence of an enlarged patch of scales on the posterior thigh, and a hypertrophied M. puboischiotibialis (flexor tibialis internus sensu Abdala et al., 2006). Within the *boulengeri* group the *darwini* group is a clade of species characterised by strong sexual dichromatism and moderately cusped, straight-side to slightly expanded crowns of the posterior marginal teeth. Abdala (2005), based on morphological and molecular phylogeny renamed this later group to '*Liolaemus laurenti* group'. Inside this