Short Notes

On the presence of the endemic skink *Chalcides simonyi* Steind., 1891 in Lanzarote (Canary Islands)

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The Canarian herpetofauna is characterized by a high number of endemic species (Machado et al., 1985). Reptiles in this archipelago are exclusively represented by three families: Lacertidae, Gekkonidae and Scincidae, *Chalcides* being the only genus of the family Scincidae in the Canary Islands. This genus includes three endemic species, *C. viridanus* from Tenerife, La Gomera and El Hierro, *C. sexlineatus* from Gran Canaria, and *C. simonyi* up to now only known for the island of Fuerteventura. Therefore, skinks were present in five of the seven main islands, except Lanzarote and La Palma (Bischoff, 1985).

Despite Lanzarote being only 10 km away from Fuerteventura, the other semidesertic island of the Canaries (100 km distant from the African continent at the closest point), at the moment, the presence of *C. simonyi* has not been reported on this island. Nevertheless, Klemmer (1976) in a general overview of the reptiles of the Canaries, mentioned the presence of *C. simonyi* on this island, although no pertinent data were available (Martín et al., 1990). Apart from this information, we knew of the existence of several dubious observations carried out by some local people. Thus we visited Lanzarote from 22-27 February 1997 with the aim of confirming the presence of the genus *Chalcides* on that island.

We covered the whole north massif (Macizo de Haría), gathering information from a total of 34 local inhabitants. The majority of zones where the animals had been reported were prospected and all data were recorded on a map (scale: 1:50.000). While the local name for this species in Fuerteventura is 'lisneja', in Lanzarote it is named 'lagartija lisa' or 'lisa'.

Figure 1. Preliminary distribution of the skinks in Lanzarote Island (in U.T.M. coordinates; each square is 5×5 km). (●) Presence; (○) possible presence; (△) unconfirmed records.

We detected 14 skinks at one locality situated in the areas surrounding Macizo de Haría (we omit the exact locality for conservation reasons) on the northern part of the island. The area (500-600 m a.s.l.) is characterized by a high abundance of medium-size stones (about 40 cm in diameter), poor soil and a very important cover of local endemic plants (see Kunkel, 1982), specially *Aeonium lancerottense*, *Lotus lancerottensis*, *Sonchus pinnatifidus*, *Nauplius intermedius*, and *Argyranthemum maderense*. In another area situated at the southeastern part of the massif, one of us (L. De León) saw two individuals about ten years ago. The majority of records from this species were from

Table 1. Size and meristic scale variables of the three specimens caught in the new population of skinks found in Lanzarote Island. SVL: Snout vent length, IL: Infradigital lamellae (4th toes), SRMT: Scales round mid trunk. Ventral scales were counted in a file between the mental shield and the vent. Data from Fuerteventura taken from Pasteur et al. (1988), based on 34 specimens.

Variable	Individuals from Lanzarote			Individuals from Fuerteventura (range)
	1	2	3	
weight (g)	25.7	23.0	14.9	—
total length (mm)	210	195	181	—
SVL (mm)	121	120	100	—
pelvic length (mm)	15.0	14.4	13.6	—
frenoculars	2	2	2	1-3 (mode: 2)
supraciliars	5	5	5	3-6
preoculars	3	3	3	2-4
IL	17	16	17	15-18
SRMT	31	33	32	29-32
ventral scales	82	74	55	76-80

the central part of the Macizo de Haría (fig. 1), with some unconfirmed records from Malpaís de La Corona.

Three of 14 observed animals were caught, to measure size and the six most common meristic scale variables (table 1). For comparison, we include data from 34 Fuerteventura specimens studied by Pasteur et al. (1988). The meristic variables and coloration patterns of the skinks found on Lanzarote fell into the ranges obtained by Pasteur et al. (1988). The presence of this species of skink on Lanzarote was expected, since both islands are included in the same 'island edifice', and the depth in the narrow strait between the two islands does not exceed 40 m (Coello et al., 1992).

From the point of view of conservation, while *C. viridanus* and *C. sexlineatus* are abundant and widely distributed on their respective islands, *C. simonyi* has been considered as the most threatened scincid species of the Canaries (López-Jurado, 1989; Martín et al., 1990). Machado et al. (1995) classified this species with 'indeterminate status' on Lanzarote. Although our results indicate that the skinks may be locally abundant on Lanzarote, the population is likely to be extremely sensitive, due to its restricted distribution (two 1 × 1 km squares). Notwithstanding the area is situated at the boundary of a natural reserve ('Parque Natural Archipiélago Chinijo'; for more information see Esquivel et al., 1995) which ensures the future conservation of the population.

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Observations on habitat, reproduction and feeding of *Boiga blandingi* (Colubridae) in south-eastern Nigeria

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Snakes of the genus *Boiga* are nocturnal arboreal colubrids widespread across southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (McDowell, 1987; Phelps, 1981, 1989), with two species (*Boiga irregularis* and *Boiga fusca*) present also in Australia and New Guinea (Cogger, 1975). Rain forests of central and western Africa are inhabited by two widely distributed species: Blanding's tree snake, *Boiga (Toxicodryas) blandingi*, and the powdered tree snake, *Boiga (Toxicodryas) pulverulenta*. Both these species are found in the extreme south-east of Nigeria, including the territories of Rivers State, Abia State, Akwa-Ibom State, and Cross River State (Romer, 1953; Butler and Reid, 1986, 1990), where we are