

Project Title

Contributions from science and social awareness for the conservation of Chaco reptiles in Argentina

Grant Type

Rufford Small Grant

Executive Summary

Diversity of Chaco reptiles is probably underestimated due to the paucity of systematic samplings. Along with the high deforestation rates threatening reptile habitats in the Chaco, people from small urban/rural towns and villages usually kill them because of fear or aversion. In this project we intend to contribute to Chaco reptiles' conservation in two ways: by increasing scientific data on reptile diversity, abundance and distribution, and also by improving the popular knowledge to relief the pressure on reptiles, to decrease the incidence of bad practices in case of accidents, and to increase the chances of surviving accidents with poisonous snakes.

Status: At schedule

Partial Results:

We bought the basic equipment to set trap arrays for sampling reptiles, in two localities. Between November 2013 and March 2014 we sampled one site at Sierra Chaco in Córdoba (central Argentina), and one site at Humid Chaco in Formosa, northern Argentina. This was the first time traps were used to sample herpetofauna in those sub-ecoregions.

The first sampling was conducted in the Humid Chaco of the province of Formosa from November/2013 to march/2014. Trap arrays used were highly effective to capture both reptiles and amphibians (not included in the original proposal). In this fieldtrip we captured eight lizard species, one amphisbaenid and ten snake species (Table 1), and 29 amphibian species (Table 2). The most common species are shown in Figure 1.

Of the species captured, one lizard of the genus *Teius* is probably a new, undescribed species. Along with this, we reported the first record of the genus *Chiasmocleis* for Argentina, with the probable addition of one *Physalaemus* species for the herpetofauna of the Chaco.

In the second fieldtrip we sampled one locality at Sierra Chaco, in a recently created Natural Reserve (Reserva Privada Los Chorrillos), testing the efficiency of two models of funnel traps to be used in combination with drift fences. These traps will allow us to sample other localities of the Sierra Chaco more effectively. During our sampling at Los Chorrillos we captured five lizard species (and recorded two more through observation), five snake species, one amphisbaenid, and eight amphibian species (Table 3).

The funnel traps used were effective and will be used in future samplings where the use of pitfall traps is not possible. In the next summer we expect to sample more localities of the Sierra Chaco using this methodology combined with active searching techniques.

The results of both samplings were reported to governmental agencies of the provinces of Formosa and Córdoba, and to the authorities of Reserva Privada Los Chorrillos. In our educational activities we will work in collaboration with personnel of the Reserve to promote the conservation of native herpetofauna to visitors, schools and authorities of neighbor cities. We are creating printed material and we will use internet and digital material to promote the results of our project to larger areas.

We've created a web page of the project within the Lab's site at <http://pelegrinnicolas.wix.com/lecoherp> where we will show the progress of this study and will promote the activities to be carried on in the future.

Table 1: List of reptiles captured in the Humid Chaco.

Family/species

Lizards (9 species)

Teiidae

Ameiva ameiva

Teius oculatus

Teius sp.

Teius teyou

Tupinambis merianae

Scincidae

Notomabuya frenata

Anguidae

Ophiodes intermedius

Polychrotidae

Polychrus acutirostris

Amphisbaenidae

Leposternum microcephalum

Snakes (10 species)

Viperidae

Bothrops diporus

Colubridae

Erythrolamprus aff. miliaris orinus

Ligophis dilepis

Erythrolamprus poecilogyrus caessius

Phalotris aff. tricolor

Sibynomorphus turgidus

Xenodon merremii

Chironius quadricarinatus maculoventris

Typhlopidae

Typhlops brongersmianus

Elapidae

Micrurus pyrrhocryptus

Table 2: List of amphibians captured in the Humid Chaco.

Family/species

Amphibians (39 species)

Ceratophryidae

Ceratophrys cranwelli

Microhylidae

Chiasmocleis albopunctata

Elachistocleis bicolor

Elachistocleis sp.

Hylidae

Dendropsophus aff. sanborni

Hypsiboas raniceps

Trachycephalus venulosus

Scinax acuminatus

Scinax fuscovarius

Scinax nasicus

Phyllomedusa azurea

Pseudis platensis

Leptodactylidae

Leptodactylus bufonius

Leptodactylus chaquensis

Leptodactylus elenae

Leptodactylus fuscus

Leptodactylus latinasus

Leptodactylus latrans

Leptodactylus mystacinus

Leptodactylus podicipinus

Leiuperidae

Physalaemus albonotatus

Physalaemus biligonigerus

Physalaemus aff. nattereri

Physalaemus riograndensis

Physalaemus sp.

Bufonidae

Rhinella bergi

Rhinella fernandezae

Rhinella major

Rhinella schneideri

Table 3: List of species captured in the Sierra Chaco.

Family/species

Amphibians

Bufo

Melanophryniscus stelzneri

Rhinella arenarum

Odontophrynidae

Odontophrynus americanus

Odontophrynus occidentalis

Leiuperidae

Physalaemus biligonigerus

Hylidae

Hypsiboas pulchellus

Leptodactylidae

Leptodactylus mystacinus

Leptodactylus chaquensis

Leptodactylus gracilis

Lizards

Phyllodactylidae

Homonota fasciata

Liolaemidae

Liolaemus saxatilis

Tropiduridae

Tropidurus spinulosus

Scincidae

Aspronema dorsivittata

Teiidae

Teius oculatus

Salvator merianae

Amphisbaenidae

Amphisbaena angustifrons

Snakes

Elapidae

Micrururus phyllhocyptus

Viperidae

Bothrops diporus

Dipsadidae

Xenodon merremii

Pseudotomodon trigonatus

Philodryas psammophidea

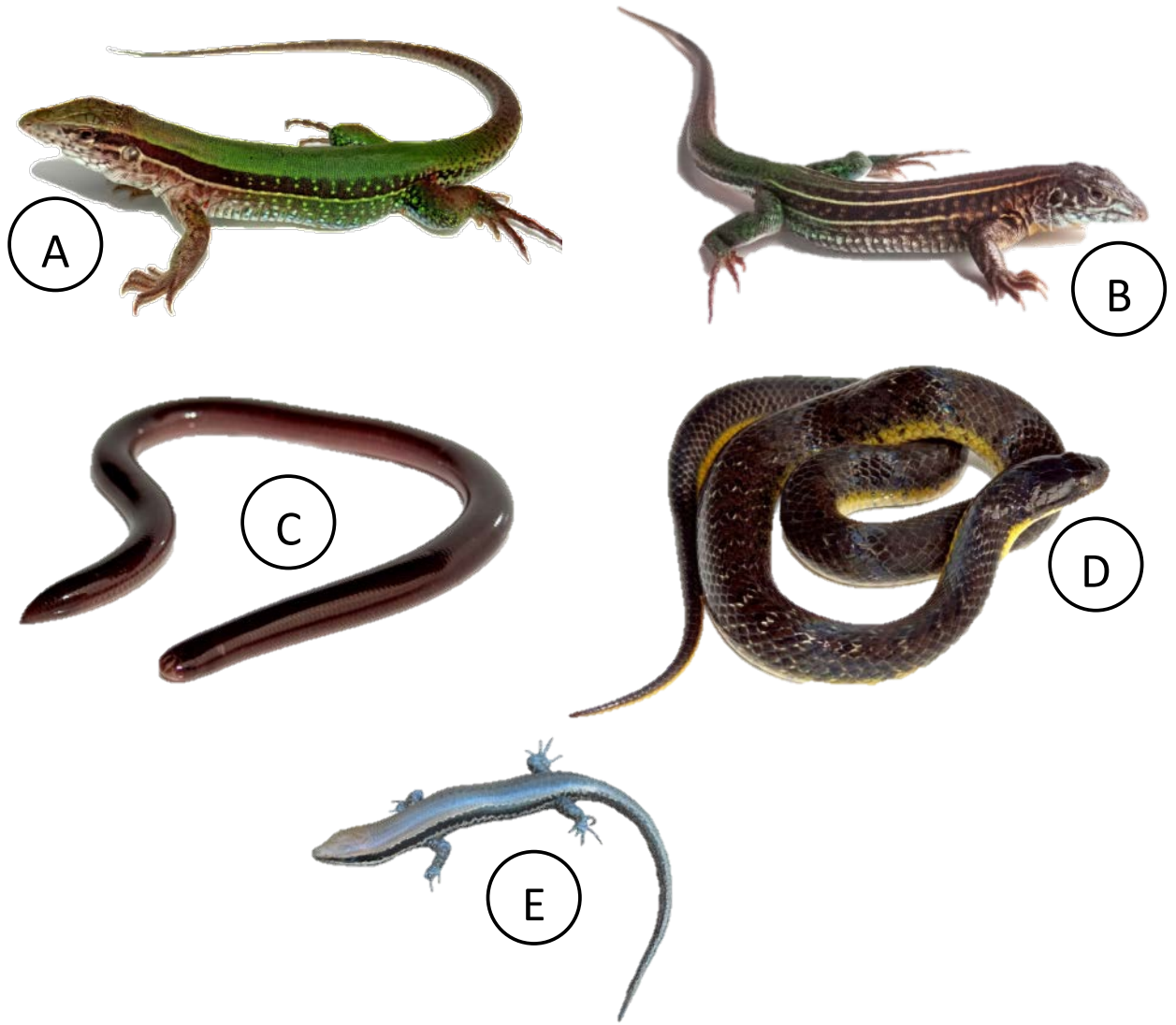


Figure 1. Most common reptile species captured in the Humid Chaco of Formosa, Argentina.

References :A.- *Ameiva ameiva*, B.- *Teius teyou*, C.- *Thyplops brongesmianus*, D.- *Epictia poecillogyrus caesius*, E.- *Notomabuya frenata*. Credits: Nicolás Pelegrin

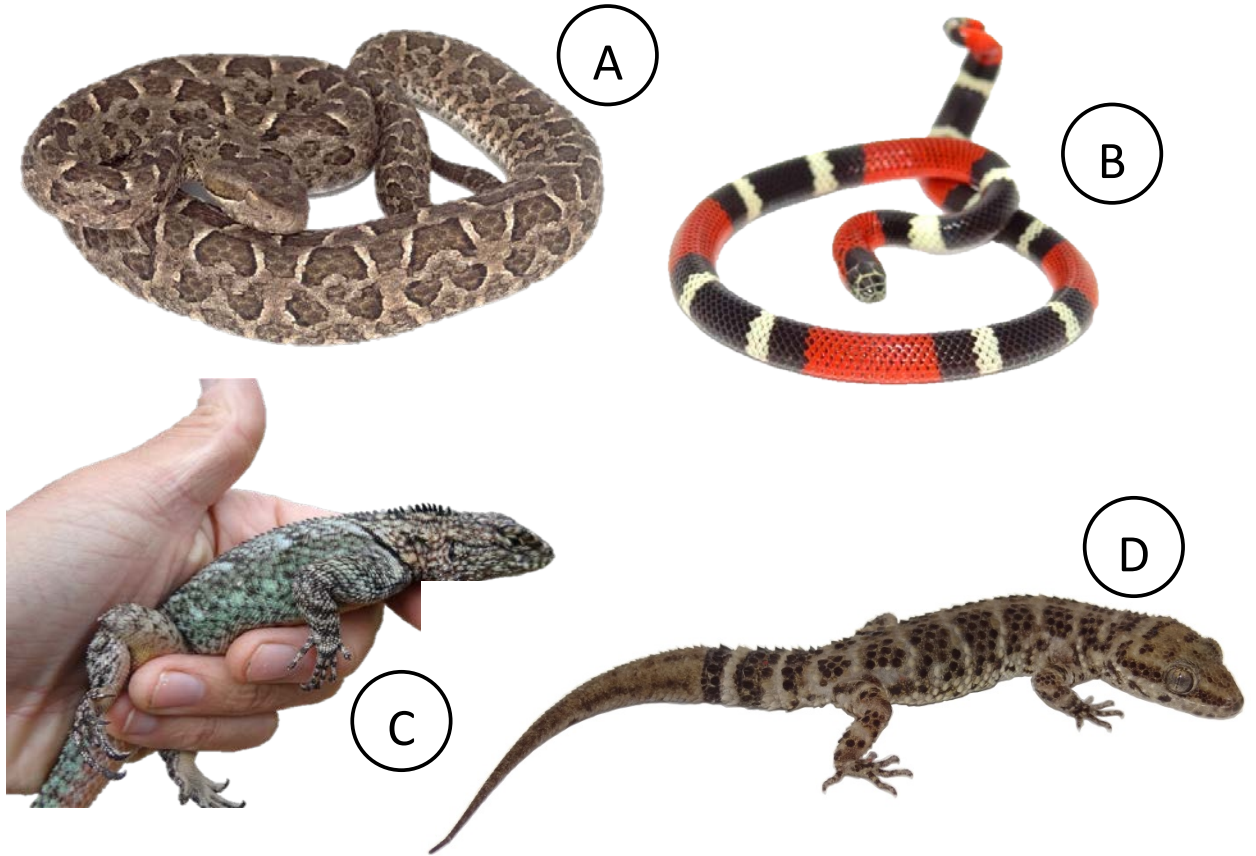


Figure 2: Most common reptile species captured in the Sierra Chaco of Córdoba, Argentina.
References: A.- *Bothrops diporus*, B.- *Micrurus pyrrocryptus*, C.- *Tropidurus spinulosus*, D.-
Homonota fasciata. Credits: Nicolás Pelegrin.