

Anolis richardii (Grenada Tree Anole)

Family: Polychrotidae (Anoles and Tree Lizards)

Order: Squamata (Lizards and Snakes)

Class: Reptilia (Reptiles)



Fig. 1. Grenada tree anole, *Anolis richardii*.

[<http://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/36640-Anolis-richardii>, downloaded 17 October 2016]

TRAITS. The general features of anoles are small scales all over the body, large head and limbs, and long thin tails (Losos, 2009). The Grenada tree anole's size ranges up to 34cm, making it one of the largest of the *Anolis* species. They can be green (Fig. 1), brown (Fig. 2), dark green or grey, with females and young being distinguished from the males by a yellow or cream side stripe as well as smaller size. A full-grown female would usually be around 15cm, a male around 30cm (Fig. 3) (Heselhaus and Schmidt, 1995). They possess a yellow dewlap, the loose skin under the neck which can be extended (Fig. 3).

DISTRIBUTION. Grenada tree anoles are found in the Lesser Antilles (Fig. 4), to be more specific Grenada, Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Lever, 2003). These are places that the Grenada tree anole is native to, however it is believed that *A. richardii* could have been introduced to Tobago by early inhabitants but there is not enough evidence to prove this (Lever, 2003). Two Grenada tree anoles were introduced into a garden in Suriname in 1973, but this was an unsuccessful attempt as they only survived until 1976 (Lever, 2003).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. They are found in forests, whether it is a naturally forested area or a disturbed secondary forest. In Grenada *A. richardii* dwells in both disturbed and undisturbed areas. In Tobago, they thrive only in disturbed areas, which suggests that they were introduced to this island. *A. richardii* feeds on a range of small insects. They dwell in trees as their common name suggests and may from time to time be seen on the ground. They may forage for food using one of two methods at any given time. They are the sit and wait (where they wait for the ideal time to catch prey that are close) or active foraging (where they hunt for their prey) methods (Losos, 2009).

REPRODUCTION. In general, the male anole bobs its head in a distinct manner indicating that it wishes to mate with the female, and in addition he raises his neck to display his brightly coloured dewlap. If the female responds positively, the male would then bite the neck of the female then attaching to her by going onto the back of the female where he places his tail under hers bringing their reproductive openings (cloacae) together. The male would then use one of his two reproductive organs (hemipenes) which is stored on the inside by bringing one of them out and inserting it into the female opening (Losos, 2009). The breeding season for *A. richardii* is not known for sure but the length of the breeding season would be affected by temperature. The female would usually lay one egg at a time at intervals of 5-25 days (Losos, 2009).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. The Grenada tree anole would eat whatever insects that are available to them at any given time. Some of these insects may be considered pests to humans. Thus, they would be considered useful because they aid pest eradication. They have not been assessed by the IUCN Red List so their status is not known.

REFERENCES

- Heselhaus, R. and Schmidt, M. (1995). Caribbean Anoles. Neptune City: T.F.H. Publications, Inc.
Lever, C. (2003). Naturalized Reptiles and Amphibians of the World. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Losos, J. B. (2009). Lizards In An Evolutionary Tree: Ecology and Adaptive Radiation of Anoles. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, Ltd.

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Fig. 2. Brown coloured Grenada tree anole, *Anolis richardii*.

[<http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/species?genus=Anolis&species=richardii>, downloaded 17 October 2016]

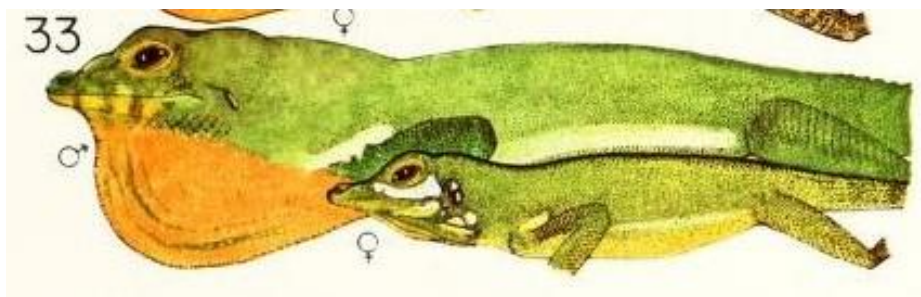


Fig. 3. Grenada tree anole, male (above) and female.

[<http://www.anoleannals.org/tag/anolis-richardii/>, downloaded 29 October 2016]

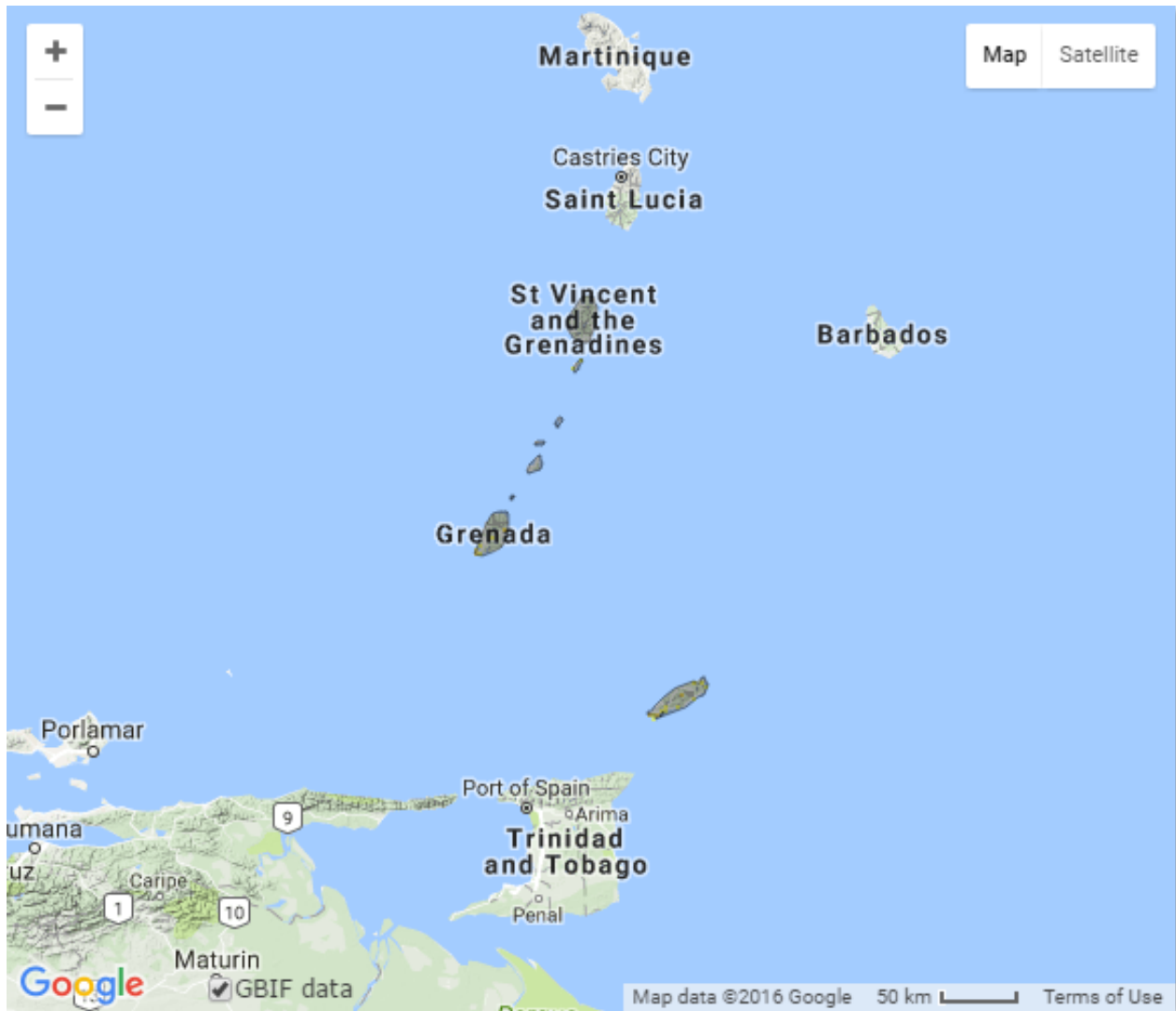


Fig. 4. Grenada tree anole geographic distribution (areas shaded dark green).

[<http://anolislizards.myspecies.info/anolis-taxa/anolis-richardii>, downloaded 17 October 2016]

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