

## First record of *Liolaemus lentus* Gallardo, 1966 (Squamata, Iguania, Liolaemini) in Río Negro province, Argentina

Cristian Hernán Fulvio Pérez and Luciano Javier Ávila\*

The *Liolaemus anomalus* species group is composed of 4 lizard species (*Liolaemus anomalus*, *L. ditadai*, *L. lentus*, and *L. pseudoanomalus*) occurring only in Argentina, and is probably one of the species groups of *Liolaemus* with the greatest number of taxonomic arrangements (Abdala, 2007). *Liolaemus lentus* is a rare and poorly known species (Fig. 1) characterized by its stout body shape, robust head, short tail and legs, dark cryptic coloration, eyelid scales developed, low number of preloacal pores, and slow moving behavior (Gallardo, 1966; Abdala, 2007). *Liolaemus lentus* was described 43 years ago from Cochicó, Altos de Cochicó, Puelén Department, in the southwest of La Pampa Province, central Argentina, and it was known only from its type locality in the Austral Monte biome. A few years after its description, it was placed in synonymy with *L. anomalus* without a proper systematic study (see Donoso Barros, 1969, 1971; Cei, 1979; Abdala, 2007). Recently, Abdala (2007), after a review of paratypes and comparisons with *L. anomalus*, revalidated *Liolaemus lentus* as a species and presented a taxonomic account. References about *Liolaemus lentus* in the literature are few, usually only the reciting of previous bibliographic information because it is a difficult species to find (cryptic coloration and inconspicuous behavior) and apparently occurs only in some very specific habitat types (salty margins of lagoons or “salinas”). To our knowledge by bibliographic search and collection revisions, only a few specimens were known until recently: the type series deposited in the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales Bernardino Rivadavia (MACN 22071–73), and specimens deposited in the Museo Provincial de Historia Natural de La Pampa and Museo de La Plata. La Pampa Museum specimens (RVP 148–149) were

collected during a field survey carried out by S. Tiranti between August 20–23 1991 in Salitral de la Perra, 25 km SE of Puelen, Puelen Department. This locality is very close to the type locality and lizards were collected inactive under salty sand blocks close to a salty creek (Tiranti pers. comm.). These specimens were the newest specimens based on field collections of the species in more than 20 years and were cited by Tiranti and Avila (1997). Abdala (2007) mentioned two new localities for the species based on five specimens deposited in Museo de La Plata. Both localities are in San Luis Province (Alto Pencoso: MLP 088–90, Sierra del Gigante: MLP 086–87, Belgrano Department), more than 400 km (straight line) north of the type locality. We were unable to examine these specimens. All 10 of these specimens are, at our knowledge, the only additional lizards of *L.*



**Figure 1.** *Liolaemus lentus*, and adult male (LJAMM-CNP 13163) from a salty lagoon, Río Negro province, northern Patagonia, Argentina. Photographs by C. H. F. Pérez.

Centro Nacional Patagónico, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CENPAT-CONICET). Boulevard Almirante Brown 2915, U9120ACD, Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina; e-mail: avila@cenpat.edu.ar

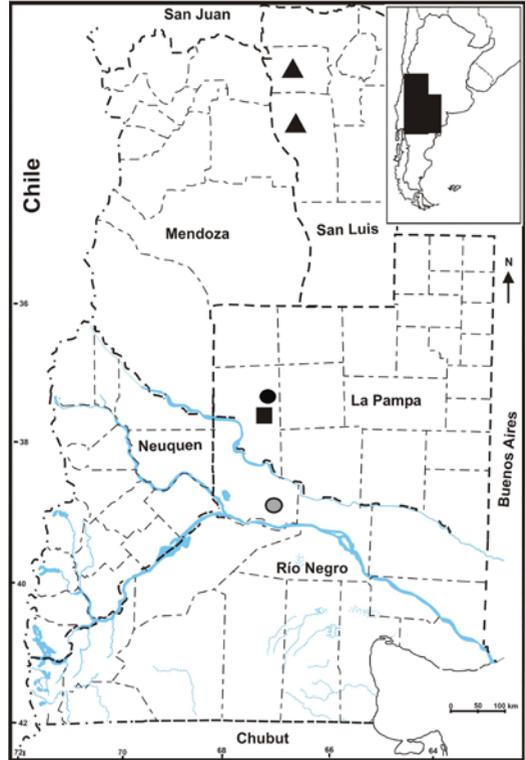
\* Corresponding author.

**Table 1.** Standard measurements and scale counts in two specimens of *Liolaemus lentus* Gallardo 1966. Measurements are in mm and scale in numbers.

	LJAMM-CNP 13163	LJAMM-CNP 13164
Sex	Adult Male	Juvenile Male
Snout-Vent length	69.76	38.47
Axilla-groin distance	36.07	19.96
Head length	15.34	9.47
Head width	15.78	8.46
Head high	10.23	5.99
Foot length	17.87	11.22
Tibial length	13.29	7.39
Arm length	20.10	11.75
Scales around midbody	79	73
Dorsal scales	97	96
Ventral scales	87	89
Fourth toe lamellae	22	23
Supralabial scales	8	6
Infralabial scales	7	7
Cloacal pores	3	4

*lentus* collected until now.

On 3 April 2010, during a fieldwork at department of General Roca, Province of Río Negro, northern Patagonia, Argentina, the junior author found at ca. 15:05 h, an adult male *L. lentus* (SVL = 69.0 mm) on a pebble flat area along the north margin of an unnamed salty lagoon to 18.3 km N of locality Ingeniero Huergo (33°56'22,3"S, 67°14'43,6"W, 294 m



**Figure 3.** Known localities for *Liolaemus lentus*: Black circle: type locality (Gallardo, 1966), black square: locality cited by Tiranti and Avila (1997) for La Pampa Province, black triangles: localities cited by Abdala (2007) for San Luis Province, and gray circle: new geographic record for *Liolaemus lentus* in northern Patagonia, Argentina.



**Figure 2.** Detail of the microhabitat where *Liolaemus lentus* was found (below) and a general view of the locality (upper).

above sea level; Fig. 2) in a Monte physiognomy with *Lycium tenuispinosum*, *Atriplex undulata*, *Sarcocornia perennis*, *Suaeda divaricata*, *Allenrolfea vaginata*, and *Cyclolepis genistoides* as common plants. The lizard was basking between the pebbles and ran to the nearest bush when the collector approached. After 15 minutes, a second specimen, a juvenile (SVL = 38.5 mm) was found in the same area and exhibited a similar behavior. Both lizards were collected by hand, sacrificed with Sodium Tiopental Pentovet®, fixed with 10% formalin and stored in 70% ethanol, using standard procedures. Standard measurements were taken under microscope (Table 1). The measurements and scale counts of these specimens (Table 1) match the description of this species (Gallardo, 1966). The present note provides the first record for *Liolaemus lentus* in the Province of Río Negro, Argentina, extending its known distribution ca. 250 km south from the type locality in La Pampa Province (Gallardo, 1996; Abdala, 2007). Voucher specimens were housed in the herpetological collection

LJAMM-CNP of the Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT-CONICET), Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina (LJAMM-CNP 13163-13164).

*Liolaemus lentus* is considered as a rare species in areas where it was recorded. Its conservation status is reported as Data Deficient, since very little information on its ecological requirements or biological characteristics are known (Avila et al., 2000). The present record provides an important contribution to the knowledge of geographic distribution of *Liolaemus lentus* (Fig. 3) and to our knowledge, the pictures presented here are the first alive images published of the species.

**Acknowledgments.** We thank L. Rosales, L. Poli and A. Monsalve for help in field collection. We thank D. Mulcahy and M. Morando for English review and comments on the manuscript.

## References

- Abdala, C.S. (2007): Phylogeny of the *boulengeri* group (Iguania: Liolaemidae, *Liolaemus*) based on morphological and molecular characters. *Zootaxa* **1538**: 1–84.
- Avila, L.J., Montero, R., Morando, M. (2000): Evaluación del estado de conservación de la fauna de lagartijas y anfibios de la República Argentina. In: Categorización de Anfibios y Reptiles de Argentina, p. 51-74. Lavilla, E.O., Richard, E. and Scrocchi, G.J., Ed., San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina.
- Cei, J. M. (1979): Remarks on the South American lizard *Liolaemus anomalus* Koslowsky, and the synonymy of *Phrynosaura werneri* Müller (Reptilia, Lacertilia, Iguanidae). *Journal of Herpetology* **13**: 183-186.
- Donoso-Barros, R. (1969): Consideraciones nomenclaturales sobre dos lagartijas Argentinas. *Boletín Sociedad de Biología de Concepción* **41**: 93-94.
- Donoso-Barros, R. (1971): The genera *Ctenoblepharis* and *Phrynosaura*. *Herpetological Review* **3** (5): 85.
- Gallardo, J. M. (1966): *Liolaemus lentus* nov. sp. (Iguanidae) de La Pampa y algunas observaciones sobre los saurios de dicha provincia Argentina y del oeste de Buenos Aires. *Neotrópica* **12**: 15-29.
- Tiranti, S.L., Avila, L.J. (1997): Reptiles of La Pampa Province, Argentina: an annotated checklist. *Bulletin of Maryland Herpetological Society* **33**: 97-117.