

First record of *Aspidoscelis motaguae* (Sackett, 1941) (Reptilia: Squamata: Teiidae) from Nicaragua

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ABSTRACT: Reporting on the first locality in Nicaragua, we extend the known geographic distribution of *Aspidoscelis motaguae* (Sackett, 1941) about 43 km southeastward from its nearest known locality, in Honduras. We shortly discuss some conservational implications and provide a photo of one Nicaraguan individual that was not collected.

Aspidoscelis motaguae (Sackett, 1941) is a medium-sized teiid lizard that is distributed disjunctly from Oaxaca, Mexico, across eastern Guatemala and northwestern El Salvador to Honduras, Central America (Duellman and Wellman 1960; Meyer and Wilson 1973; Köhler 2008).

On 27 April 2012, five individuals of *Aspidoscelis motaguae* were observed in an area of proximately 10 m² about 600 m southeast of the small village Las Minas (13°45'13.17"N, 86°44'15.91"W; WGS84), ca. 680 m elevation, Santa María municipality, Departamento Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua, none of which were preserved (Figure 1). A sixth individual of this species found dead at the same site was collected. Eyes and tympanum had been eaten by ants but otherwise the specimen appeared to be in good condition. It was deposited in the collection of Senckenberg Research Institute (SMF), Frankfurt, Germany, and catalogued under the voucher number SMF 94170. This represents the first record in Nicaragua and extends the known geographic distribution of *A. motaguae* about 43 km southeastward from its nearest published locality in El Zamorano, Departamento Francisco Morazán, Honduras (Meyer and Wilson 1973). The collected individual is an adult female (snout-vent length 116 mm, tail length 219 mm). In external morphology it agrees well with the descriptions and illustrations provided in Duellman and Wellman (1960) and Köhler (2008).

The habitat at the collection site is pine-oak forest corresponding to Tropical Dry Forest formation of Holdridge (1967) in succession Stage 1. The current vegetation consists mostly of vines (*Combretum* sp., *Cydista* sp.), shrubs (*Acacia collinsi*, *Byrsonima crassifolia*, *Lonchocarpus* sp.), herbs (*Mimosa* sp., *Paspalum* sp., *Sida* sp.), and scattered trees (*Diospiros salicifolia*, *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, *Guarea* sp., *Guazuma ulmifolia*, *Lisiloma* sp., *Sapindus saponaria*, *Schoepfia screebberi*, *Tabebuia rosae* var. *neochrysantha*, *Trichilia* sp.).

This range extension might seem to be of little importance at first sight because it is just a few kilometres away from the nearest known locality in Honduras. However, the formal addition of a species to a country's faunal list by itself has some conservational implications.

First, it is important to document the distributional endpoints of species as closely as possible, especially given the rapid destruction of all natural habitats in Central America. Second, having documented a species to occur in a certain country might trigger conservation action or at least awareness from governmental and non-governmental institutions in the respective country.



FIGURE 1. Individual of *Aspidoscelis motaguae* in life from Nicaragua (not collected).

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