

LIVING WORLD

Journal of the Trinidad and Tobago
Field Naturalists' Club

admin@ttfnc.org

ISSN 1029-3299



First Records for Four Reptile Species from Gasparillo Island off North-Western Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago

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Charles, S.P., Corcoran, P., Lukaszewicz, J., and Rutherford, M.G. 2012. First Records for Four Reptile Species from Gasparillo Island off North-Western Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2012, 81.

First Records for Four Reptile Species from Gasparillo Island off North-Western Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago

Gasparillo Island (also known as Centipede Island) is a tiny satellite located 220 m off the north-western peninsula of Trinidad at 10°40'34.36''N, 61°39'11.83''W, near to Chaguaramas Bay. The island covers approximately 2.11 hectares, has an approximate elevation of 25 m and is composed primarily of rugged limestone rock with fairly shallow soil that hosts a tropical deciduous seasonal forest. Gasparillo Island has an even smaller satellite of its own called Little Centipede Island. It is but a rock a few metres high, 0.037 hectares in extent with only a few scrubby trees, and is only 17 m from Gasparillo Island. In his primary paper on the terrestrial reptiles of the islands off north-western Trinidad, Boos (1984) treated these two islands as a unit and noted the rugged nature of the terrain and difficulty of safely landing on Gasparillo Island, suggesting these as reasons for the lack of past herpetological collecting effort there. A single lizard, *Anolis aeneus*, was noted for these two small islands, but it was not specified if the species was known from both islands, or from only one (Boos 1984).

We made three visits to Gasparillo Island in search of reptiles. The first was on a sunny day with passing showers between 1600 h and 1800 h on 13 January, 2010 (PC and JL); the second was on a sunny day between 1100 h and 1500 h on 24 March, 2011 (SPC and MGR); and the final visit was made on an overcast day between 1200 h and 1400 h on 11 April, 2011 (SPC and MGR). The most intensive search was made on the second visit, during which we moved over a wide section of the island, spanning both the entire length and breadth, and from sea level to the summit. We searched under fallen logs and rocks, in crevices between rocks and bark, in leaf litter and soil, along lower sections of the trunks and branches of trees and shrubs as well as inside a small cave. During our three visits, we did not observe *Anolis aeneus*, but noted four other species of reptiles, all of which are new records for Gasparillo Island and are reported as follows:

***Amphisbaena fuliginosa* L.**

(Reptilia: Squamata: Amphisbaenia: Amphisbaenidae).

We found one adult worm lizard on 13 January, 2010 in the soil under rotting wood on the north-east facing side of the island. The animal was approximately 30 cm long and appeared in good physical condition.

***Iguana iguana* L.**

(Reptilia: Squamata: Sauria: Iguanidae).

Boos (1984) speculated that iguanas were probably

present on Gasparillo and Little Centipede. We observed a sub-adult iguana about 1.5 m above ground in the branches of a shrub on the crest of the island on 11 April, 2011. On the same day, scat a few centimetres long and composed of tightly packed desiccated leaves was found on the forest floor. It was presumed to be from this species.

***Gonatodes vittatus* Lichtenstein**

(Reptilia: Squamata: Sauria: Sphaerodactylidae).

We noted two adult males and two adult females on 24 March, 2011 and two adult females on 11 April, 2011. These streak lizards were on rocks and lower segments of tree trunks.

***Gymnophthalmus underwoodi* Grant**

(Reptilia: Squamata: Sauria: Gymnophthalmidae).

We saw two adult shiny lizards foraging in leaf litter on 24 March, 2011.

Investigation of the biodiversity of the satellite islands of Trinidad and Tobago remains a fascinating pursuit. All of the species noted during our surveys of Gasparillo Island have also been recorded from the nearby larger satellite island of Gaspar Grande (Boos 1984; Boos and Quesnel 1994), as well as from the main island of Trinidad. The herpetofauna of Gasparillo Island and other nearby larger satellite islands may provide opportunities to study various aspects of community ecology including predator-prey interactions and competition.

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