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ABSTRACTS

Shedding Light on the Luminous Lizard (*Proctoporus shrevei*) of Trinidad: A Brief Natural History

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A herpetological debate lasting 70 years regarding the so-called luminous lizard, *Proctoporus shrevei*, of Trinidad is addressed. Published natural history accounts from the 1930's suggested that the males of the species possess the capability of producing light. Despite the potential significance of such a trait in a terrestrial vertebrate, no direct studies of *P. shrevei* were conducted and findings from indirect studies were equivocal. To resolve the debate, a field investigation was conducted in May 2001 and 2002 with

adult *P. shrevei* in Trinidad. Evidence supported the hypothesis that the lizard's scales are highly reflective and, when combined with fluctuations in dermal pigmentation, this produces an optical illusion consistent with early natural history observations. No evidence for bioluminescence was found. However, despite being a tropical organism, *P. shrevei* displays intolerance to heat and life history adaptations to relatively cold, cave-entrance microhabitats.