

Confirmation of the presence of the non-native tegu *Gymnophthalmus underwoodi* Grant, 1958 (Squamata: Gymnophthalmidae) in Anguilla

FARAH MUKHIDA¹, DEVON CARTER¹, GIOVANNI HUGHES¹, RHON A. CONNOR² &
DANNIELLA SHERWOOD^{3,4,5,6,7,*}

¹Anguilla National Trust, North Side, Anguilla; e-mail: fmukhida@axanationaltrust.com

²Department of Natural Resources, Anguilla Government, The Valley, Anguilla; e-mail: rhon.connor@gov.ai

³Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust, G.06 Allia Future Business Centre, London Road,
Peterborough, PE2 8AN, United Kingdom

⁴Arachnology Research Association, 124 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX, United Kingdom

⁵Fundación Ariguanabo, 4111, Calle 58, e/ ave. 41 y ave.43, San Antonio de los Baños,
Provincia Artemisa c.p. 18100, Cuba

⁶IUCN Species Survival Commission Atlantic Islands Invertebrate Specialist Group,
c/o Species Recovery Trust, 37 Albany Road, Salisbury SP1 3YQ, United Kingdom

⁷Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas de Honduras (CIBIOH), 5to piso edificio palmira,
Departamento Francisco Morazán, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

* Corresponding author: danni.sherwood@hotmail.com

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Abstract: *Gymnophthalmus underwoodi* Grant, 1958, a non-native tegu that has been expected for some time to possibly occur in Anguilla, is formally recorded as present on the island based on a female recently collected from a pitfall trap, deposited in the collection of the Anguilla National Trust.

Keywords: herpetology, invasive species, lizard, pitfall trap, reptile

Introduction

Gymnophthalmus underwoodi Grant, 1958 is a parthenogenetic tegu originally described from Barbados and known to also occur in Antigua, Brazil, Cuba, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Suriname, St. Barthélemy, St. Kitts, St. Martin, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago (THORPE 2022, UETZ et al. 2025). Many of the populations of this lizard in the northern islands of the Lesser Antilles are considered to be non-native and a recent paper mentioned that its presence on Anguilla was likely (visual records without vouchers), but not formally reported, based on personal communication with the author FM (THIBAUDIER et al. 2023).

Results

Whilst examining samples of invertebrates collected for unrelated project work, we discovered a small female (SVL 23.3 mm) of *G. underwoodi* (Figs. 1A–C) that had been collected in a pitfall trap placed at the Fountain National Park, Anguilla (Figs. 1D–E) between 28–29/11/2024. The habitat at the locality where the traps were set is soil, primarily within *Leucaena leucocephala* (Fabaceae) and *Lantana involucrata* (Verbenaceae). Thus, we are able to formally confirm the presence of this species in Anguilla for the first time, based on this reference specimen deposited in the collection of the Anguilla National Trust. This species is likely distributed more widely on the island, but the true extent of its distribution can only be elucidated with targeted future fieldwork. Its present impact on the indigenous and endemic reptiles of Anguilla remains unknown.

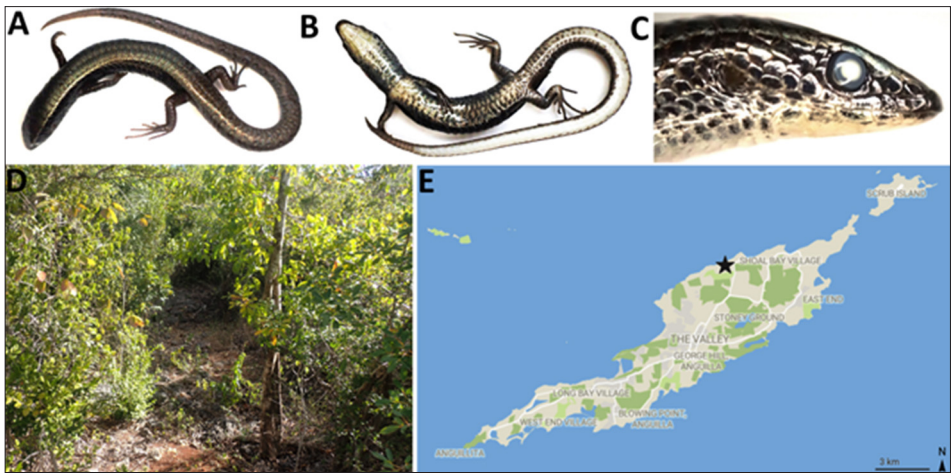


Fig. 1: *Gymnophthalmus underwoodi* Grant, 1958 on Anguilla. A – Specimen, habitus, dorsal; B – Idem, ventral; C – close-up of head, lateral view; D – habitat at collecting locality; E location (star) of Fountain National Park. All photos by D. Sherwood, map made with OpenStreetMap (2025).

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