

Variation in the Crevice Spiny Lizard, *Sceloporus poinsettii* Baird and Girard

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Abstract

This report updates information on variation and distribution of the Crevice Spiny Lizard, *Sceloporus poinsettii* Baird and Girard. Five intergrading subspecies of *S. poinsettii* (scalation and pattern features) are recognized (two described as new). The holotype of *S. poinsettii polylepis* is regarded as a morphological variant or intergrade; the name *polylepis* is reassigned to a distinctive population that lacks any other name. This large, rock-dwelling lizard of the *S. torquatus* species-group occurs generally in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

The initial discovery of some smallish *Sceloporus poinsettii*-like lizards in northeastern Zacatecas in 1975 and from other nearby localities in later years (and their uncertain identification over the past several years) prompted study of *S. poinsettii* to determine the extent of variation throughout its geographic range. Familiarity with *S. poinsettii*, both in the field at various locales and from examination of museum specimens, has provided some insight into character trends and geographically recognizable populations. Smith ("1936"[1938], 1939) provided a working definition of the then monotypic species. Smith and Chrapliwy (1958) described two subspecies, *S. p. macrolepis* and *S. p. polylepis*, both recognized in this report. Tanner (1987) described *S. p. robisoni*, which is not here recognized (see Remarks, *S. p. macrolepis*). Auth et al. (2000), following the lead of Olson (1998), used name-combinations reflecting conspecificity of *S. poinsettii* and *S. mucronatus*; Olson's material and specimens subsequently studied from the states of Hidalgo and Mexico were assigned to *S. mucronatus* (Webb et al., 2002; Bell et al., 2003:146).

Specimens with small dorsal scales in the eastern desert parts of Durango, Chihuahua (including holotype of *S. p. polylepis* as well as other near topotypic specimens), and adjacent Coahuila have been referred to *polylepis* for many years, but their collective variant array of patterns (with some not unlike those of the adjacent Texas subspecies) has contributed to a festering, unsatisfactory concept of the taxon *polylepis*. The holotype of *S. p. polylepis* has small dorsal scales (41-42, *polylepis*) but a rear-of-head pattern with a black cruciform blotch (characteristic of Texas subspecies) and is regarded as an intermediate morphological variant. Specimens previously assigned to *S. p. polylepis* are now regarded as variants or intergrades. This revelation of regarding the holotype of *S. poinsettii polylepis* as part of a large intergrading population (Fig. 11) requires inquiry into the status of the name *polylepis*.

The Code (ICZN, 1999) declares that [Art. 23.8] "A species-group name established for an animal later found to be a hybrid must not be used as the valid name for either of the parental species." Unfortunately, Art. 23.8 (and the Code otherwise) seems

along US Hwy 190, 12.3 mi E Pecos River (author sight record only); ca. 21.2 air km NE Fort Lancaster (UTEP 14167). **Culberson County:** Guadalupe Mountains National Park, McKittrick Canyon (UTEP 6698); Guadalupe Mountains, Frijole (Mosauer, 1932-2, KU 18425); Delaware Mts, ca. 6-7 air mi SE jct US Hwy 62-180 and St. Hwy 54 [31°42'N, 104°47'W] (UTEP 15884); Rustler Hills, along Farm Road 2185, 9.0 road mi S jct with Ranch Road 652 (UTEP 12310-11); N end Apache Mountains, along Farm Road 2185, 21.3 road mi NW jct with Farm Road 2809 [38°18'48"N, 104°32'07"W] (UTEP 13735). **El Paso County:** Huaco Mountains, within two-mile radius Huaco Tanks State Park (UTEP 170-71, 604-06, 611-15, 623, 641-49, 800, 1041-42, 1046-47, 1067, 1246, 1648, 1832-42, 2318, 2586-87, 2590, 2620-22, 2949-54, 3364, 4131-32, 6170, 10678, 10742); 6.3 mi W Huaco Tanks [31°53'50"N, 106°7'10"W] (UTEP 2796-97); 1.2 air mi S Helm's West Well [31°45'05"N, 106°01'45"W] (UTEP 2854-55); 1 mi S US Hwy 62-180 on Gasline Road [this intersection 0.8 mi W jct US 62-180 and Huaco Tanks road, St. Rd 2775] (UTEP 2650); 6.4-6.6 mi S and 1/2 mi E jct US Hwy 62-180 and Gasline Road (UTEP 197-98, 1068); ca. 2 mi N and 1/2 mi E jct Gasline Road and Fabens cutoff road (UTEP 10033); 4 mi W Huaco Pumping Station (in Hudspeth County) near jct Gasline Road (UTEP 4133, 5305). **Hudspeth County:** N slope Sierra Blanca Mt. (UTA 400); Quitman Mts, 8.7 mi W (via Interstate-10) Sierra Blanca (UZA 40656); Comudas Mountains, NW side San Antonio Mountain, just across New Mexico state line [32°00'02"N, 105°33'36"W] (UTEP 11524); Sierra Tinaja Pinta Mts, ca. 5.1 air mi NNE Comudas [31°51'30"N, 105°28'W] (UTEP 16061); Eagle Mountains, Wind Canyon [30°54'30"N, 105°04'W] (UTEP 8171-72); Spar Valley mining area [30°56'15"N, 105°03'W] (UTEP 1873), and Siphon Canyon [30°55'30"N, 105°04'W] (UTEP 1874); Indio Mountains, vicinity Indio Ranch Research Station [headquarters ca. 30°45'30"N, 105°00'18"W] (UTEP 11385, 11482, 12007, 13693-94, 13889-90, 14027, 14079); Ojo Caliente, 30° on Rio Grande [rancho, 30°49'30"N, 105°19'W] (Yarrow, 1882 [1883]-58, Cape, 1900:353, Smith, 1936 [1938], USNM 2958 [n = 3, two recataloged as USNM 328738-39]). **Irion County:** 7 mi SW Mertzon (ASNH 10261, 10265), 11 mi SW Mertzon (ASNH 2765, 10697, 10699), 13 mi W-NW Mertzon (ASNH 544-46, 1018, 2778, 2782-84, 2813-25, 2872-73, 3680-83, 3818, 3820, 3824-25, 3832, 4016, 4039-46, 4711-16, 4727-30); 15 mi NW Mertzon (ASNH 10264). **Jeff Davis County:** Davis Mountains, 0.3 mi S-0.7 mi W McDonald Observatory [30°40'N, 104°02'W] (UTEP 14578); W edge Fort Davis (UTA 17245-55, neonates); near Fort Davis, HNH 118 (UTA 8692); 1/2 mi N (Hwy 17) Fort Davis (UTEP 2812); 2 mi NW (Hwy 118) Fort Davis (UTEP 6173, 6177-78); Davis Mountains State Park (NMSU 3184); ca. 30 mi W (St. Hwy 166) Fort Davis (ASNH 10263, 10696). **Llano County:** 7 mi S-6.1 mi W [air] Oxford [30°30'15"N, 98°48'05"W] (RWA 4437-38); 2 mi W Llano (UTA 617); Houston Ranch, 12.8 km N Llano (UTA 15019-25); 19 mi SW Llano (TCWC 58470). **Mason County:** near Pontotoc (UTA 1703); 2 mi E Katelym (ASNH 10453); 1 mi S Katelym (ASNH 10757); 6 mi S-3.8 mi W Mason, Llano River (ASNH 10206); 9 mi SW (Ranch Road 1871) Mason (ASNH 81, 84, 86); 15 mi S (Ranch Road 2389) Mason (ASNH 82, 85); Hilda, "10 mi E Mason" [Ranch Road 783, ca. 14 air mi SE Mason] (ASNH 83); 18 mi E (St. Hwy 29) Mason [close to Llano County line] (UZA 2875). **Medina County:** 4 air km SSE Mico on Lake Medina (UTEP 9461). **Pecos County:** 20 mi SW McCamey, Upton County (ASNH 10493); 6.7 mi N Fort Stockton (UTEP 11509); ca. 6 mi W-0.8 mi N Fort Stockton [30°54'30"N, 103°00'37"W] (UTEP 16067); along St. Hwy 290, 2 mi E jct with US Hwy 67 (UZA 2874). **Presidio County:** 13.4 mi N-15.6 mi W [air] Terlingua Post Office, Brewster County [29°30'15"N, 103°49'05"W] (UTEP 14579, RWA 5057); 7.8 mi S-1.8 mi E [air] Candelaria [30°01'15"N, 104°29'20"W] (RWA 5142). **Reagan County:** Ted Harris Ranch, 12 mi S Best (ASNH 4803). **Roeyes County:** 1.8 mi S Balmorhea [30°11'52"N, 101°52'N]. **San Saba County:** Gorman Falls Fishing Camp, 6.8 mi SE Bend (ASNH 5196). **Upton County:** King Mt., 4.6 mi NW (US Hwy 385) and 3.2 mi E McCamey (UTEP 14235). **Val Verde County:** N side Amistad Reservoir, near US Hwy 90 (UTA 16297, 18369-70; 10.6 mi N and 1.3 mi E jct US Hwy 90 and US 277-371 [29°35'N, 100°53'W] (UTEP 14572); 0.2 mi N Pecos River along US Hwy 90 (UZA 35609); 5 mi N Pecos River along US Hwy 90 at railroad crossing (UZA 36340); Rio San Pedro [= Devils River] (Webb, 1988, USNM 2948 [n = 2, both recataloged as USNM 29581, 131668]; this indefinite locality for many USNM specimens here map-plotted as restricted [30°03'40"N, 101°07'22"W] by Axtell, 2000). **McMurry County:** Sierra del Presidio, 51.2 mi NNE Samalaya [31°18'N, 106°24'W] (UTEP 6636-38); Rancho Cerros Colorado (ca. 31°11'N, 106°22'W), 22 air km SE Samalaya (UBIPRO 1848) and Sierra del Presidio, 10 km E Cerros Colorado (UBIPRO 2067-70) (Lemos-Espinal et al., 1997:198, 199; other specimens at UCM); Rancho El Setenta, 17 km S Samalaya on Hwy 45 (UBIPRO 2331, 2426, 2440-42); Sierra Rica, 3.4 mi S-23.7 mi E [air] La Mula [= Porrero del Llano] [29°09'30"N, 104°03'W] (RWA 2556); 24.3 road mi S La Mula [28°53'10"N, 104°28'13"W] (UTEP 9219-20); 12.7 km S-34 km E [air] Chilicote [28°53'N, 104°29'15"W] (RWA 6426, UTEP 14589); 1 mi S San Carlos [= Benavides, ca. 29°06'30"N, 103°54'30"W] (SRSU 1547); 6 km SE Manuel Benavides at 29°05'27.7"N, 103°51'16.3"W (Lemos-Espinal et al., 2000:185, UBIPRO 4378); 1 mi N El Porvenir Salcaies (SRSU 2829); 66 mi S S Ojinaga (SRSU 2824-25); 1 mi S [Rancho los] Hechicero[s] [28°37'N, 103°39'W] (Chrapliwy and Fugler, 1955, KU 33811). **Coahuila:** 10 road km S road jct in San Miguel [28°32'53"N, 102°56'30"W] (UTEP 14611); 3 mi S-8 mi E [Rancho los] Hechicero[s], Chihuahua (Chrapliwy and Fugler, 1955; Smith and Chrapliwy, 1958; KU 33856); east slopes of Sierra Jardin [three sites encompassing 29°06'10"N, 102°33'38"W] (UTEP 14644-70); Sierra del Carmen (FMNH 25304-06); Sierra del Carmen, Carboneras Canyon (Gloyd and Smith, 1942:32, USNM 103693-95). El Jardín [Rancho, 29°07'30"N, 102°36'W] (FMNH 42386-88), and Tanque de Santo Domingo [Rancho, 28°56'40"N, 102°24'W] (Schmidt and Owens, 1944:104, FMNH 47103-05); Rancho Buena Vista [28°26'30"N, 102°28'W] (Cañon del Hillcoat, FMNH 47106), La Serrento (FMNH 47111), and La Palma [Rancho, 29°20'N, 102°36'W] (Mesa de Hillcoat, FMNH 47107-10, Schmidt and Owens, 1944:104); Juarez, Rancho de los Borregos (Schmidt and Owens, 1944, FMNH 47117); Sierra de la Encantada, 81/2 air km NE Rancho La Encantada [28°38'55"N, 102°23'W] (RWA [1]); 4 mi SSE Rancho La Encantada [28°32'N, 102°22'10"W] (RWA 5971); 41/2-5 mi S Rancho La Encantada (UTEP 14636, 14638); Rancho Las Margaritas [28°42'N, 101°47'W] (Smith and Chrapliwy, 1958, KU 38305-06); 3 mi W Múzquiz (UTEP 14613); 2.3 mi SW Múzquiz [27°50'30"N, 101°32'57"W] (RWA [3]); 5 mi SW Múzquiz [27°48'N, 101°31'W] (RWA 1421); ca. 20 air mi ESE Zaragoza [28°23'55"N, 101°14'52"W] (RWA [1]); ca. 18 air mi ESE Zaragoza (3.7 mi from Rancho Las Cuevas) [28°23'26"N, 101°12'W] (RWA [1]); 17.2 mi SSW Villa Unión [28°03'N, 100°48'W] (TCWC 38947, 38951); 10 mi S Sabinas (FMNH 208105); 15 mi S Sabinas, Hwy 57 (Schmidt and Owens, 1944, FMNH 47118-22).

Additional records. An updated account of acceptable records of occurrence in southeastern New Mexico (*S. p. axtellii*) is mapped in Degenhardt et al. (1996). A detailed discussion of the distribution in Texas with a documented listing of localities (and map) is in Axtell (1987). **New Mexico:** **Chaves County:** 18 mi WNW Hope, Eddy County [32°52'25"N, 105°01'30"W] (AMNH 84640). **Eddy County:** Guadalupe Mts, 30 mi SW Carlsbad (CM 18303); 12 mi NW Carlsbad (CM 64850). **Lincoln County:** 19 3/4 mi E-6 mi N Capitan [T8S, R17E, Sec. 11] (Eastern New Mexico Univ. 4235, C. W. Painter, in litt.); 4.2 mi W Glencoe (TNHC 33462). **Otero County:** 2 mi N Cloudcroft (TNHC 11840). **Coahuila:** Sierra del Carmen, Juarez Canyon (Gloyd and Smith, 1942:232, FMNH 10497); Sierra del Carmen, Palau, and Hacienda La Encantada (Schmidt and Owens, 1944:104).

Sceloporus poinsettii polylepsis. **México:** **Nuevo León:** Microondas La Joya access road (Hwy 57 turnoff 1.8 road mi N Nuevo León state line) [23°49'40"N, 100°31'05"W] (RWA 5731-33, [1]); UTEP 6085, 14568-69; 6.3 road mi NE Los Medina [poblado ca. 24°01'N, 102°23'W] (Hwy 57 turnoff 13.9 road mi N Microondas La Joya turnoff) (UTEP 6224); 31/2 road mi NNW Santa Rita [ca. 24°12'30"N, 100°29'W] (RWA 6172, UTEP 4327); 1.1 mi E Hwy 57 turnoff to San Jose de las Raíces [24°33'57"N, 100°16'25"W] (RWA 6161, [1]). **San Luis Potosí:** Huertillas [ca. 24°04'30"N, 101°08'W], 5.3 road mi (Hwy 62) W Ignacio Zaragoza (RWA [1], UTEP 3729-30); San Antonio on Hwy 62 (10.6 mi E jct Hwy 57-62 in Matehuala, or 1.3 road mi W Nuevo León state line) [23°41'30"N, 100°23'30"W] (RWA 6194, UTEP 3632-33, 3702). **Zacatecas:** Sierra de las Iglesias, 31/2 road mi W La Presa de Junco (ca. 151/2 air mi NW San Tiburcio) [24°17'45"N, 101°41'45"W] (UTEP 3614); 15 road mi SW (Hwy 54) turnoff (Hwy jct) to San Tiburcio (UTEP 3615, 8911-19); 18 km SW (Hwy 54) San Tiburcio (UTEP 6751-52); 81/2 road mi E (Hwy 62) to Matehuala San Tiburcio (RWA [3], UTEP 3618-23).

