



NOTA

REDISCOVERING THE LIZARD *Urostrophus undulatus* (SQUAMATA, IGUANIDAE) (WIEGMANN, 1834) IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

We report the third confirmed record of *Urostrophus undulatus* in Brazil, observed in Piratini, Rio Grande do Sul, in November 2024. This finding extends its known range and suggests potential overlooked populations. Continued surveys and conservation efforts are crucial for understanding and protecting the species.

Keywords: *Urostrophus*, Brazil, conservation, rare, population.

RESUMEN

Redescubriendo el lagarto *Urostrophus undulatus* (Squamata, Iguanidae) (Wiegmann, 1834) en el sur de Brasil. Reportamos el tercer registro confirmado de *Urostrophus undulatus* en Brasil, observado en Piratini, Rio Grande do Sul, en noviembre de 2024. Este hallazgo extiende su distribución conocida y sugiere la existencia de poblaciones posiblemente pasadas por alto. Se requieren más estudios y esfuerzos de conservación.

Palabras clave: *Urostrophus*, Brasil, conservación, rara, población.

Urostrophus undulatus is a small diurnal lizard, reaching approximately 30 cm in total length, with the tail comprising about 70% of this measurement (Etheridge & Williams, 1991). It inhabits the Pampa biome and is considered semi-arboreal, moving among trees and shrubs taller than 2 meters, although it also uses the ground for locomotion (Gallardo, 1980; Etheridge & Williams, 1991; Langone et al., 2000; Machado et al., 2005). The species has cryptic coloration and secretive behavior, which make it difficult to detect in the field (Achaval & Olmos, 2003; Machado et al., 2005; Ávila et al., 2013). Its biology remains poorly understood (Machado et al., 2005; Abdala et al., 2012), but it is known to be oviparous, with females laying clutches but it is known to be oviparous, with females laying clutches of approximately 4–7 eggs (Langone et al., 2000; Winck et al., 2012). The diet consists primarily of arthropods (Machado et al., 2005).

Despite its historical range across Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, *U. undulatus* remains poorly documented, and conservation assessments reflect this scarcity of information. Globally, it is listed as Data Deficient (DD) on the IUCN Red List (Cacciali et al., 2021). In Uruguay, where the species has been recorded in several departments—including Paysandú, Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Rocha,



Canelones, San José, and Rivera— It is classified as Data Deficient but considered a conservation priority because of its limited range and signs of local population declines (Etheridge & Williams, 1991; Langone et al., 2000; Carreira et al., 2006; Canavero et al., 2010; Abdala et al., 2012; Carreira & Estrades, 2013; Carreira & Maneyro, 2015). A previously cited record from Montevideo was reassigned to Canelones after verification of collection data (Carreira et al., 2006). In Argentina, *U. undulatus* is known only from a single locality in Punta Lara (Etheridge & Williams, 1991) and was excluded from national assessments due to the absence of confirmed records for over a century (Ávila et al., 2013). In Brazil, the species is included within the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Threatened Amphibians and Reptiles of the Southern Region (Portaria nº 25, February 2012), underscoring the importance of updated distributional data. After its original description in 1834 from São Lourenço do Sul (the type locality), *U. undulatus* remained unrecorded in Brazil for over 179 years until it was rediscovered in 2013 in Cassino, both in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Oliveira et al., 2022) (Fig. 1). Although a subsequent record was mentioned by Cei (1993), the specimen in question appears to correspond to *U. grilli*, based on both morphological features and its locality of origin. Additionally, specimens attributed to *U. undulatus* deposited at MZUSP lack collection date information, preventing confirmation of any records between the original description and the 2013 rediscovery.

Here, we report the third confirmed record of *U. undulatus* in Brazil, further expanding its known distribution. The field observation was made on 30 November 2024 at a site known as Cerro do Ubaldo (−31.510295, −53.111799; Datum WGS84), in the municipality of Piratini, state of Rio Grande do Sul, approximately 10 km from the urban perimeter (Fig. 1). The area lies at an elevation of 360 meters and is characterized by granite outcrops and open grassland with scattered shrubs, a vegetation formation typical of the southern Brazilian highlands. This locality is situated about 120 km northeast of the most recent record from Cassino and roughly 100 km west of the historical type locality in São Lourenço do Sul (Oliveira et al., 2022). The individual was photographed and released (Fig. 2). Our finding suggests the possible existence of additional populations in the region, although the species may remain undetected due to its elusive behavior and habitat use. The observed color pattern corresponds to the “iheringi” morphotype, which is the expected pattern for Brazilian populations (Cei, 1993; Carreira & Maneyro, 2013), supporting the identification.

Additional field surveys are essential to clarify the current distribution of *U. undulatus* in Brazil, especially in areas with similar ecological conditions that may host undetected populations. New occurrence records,

such as the one reported here, are fundamental for advancing knowledge of this elusive and poorly documented species, whose actual range is likely underestimated due to its rarity and the scarcity of records. Expanding available information is therefore a priority, as limited data hinder accurate assessments and effective conservation planning. For rare and little-known species like *U. undulatus*, key components of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List) assessments include geographic distribution and potential threats. Documenting additional localities not only refines the understanding of the species' range but also helps identify priority areas for focused ecological and conservation studies. We emphasize the urgent need to implement targeted survey and conservation programs aimed at locating and monitoring existing populations. Such initiatives are essential to bridge critical knowledge gaps and to support informed strategies for the effective management and protection of this species.

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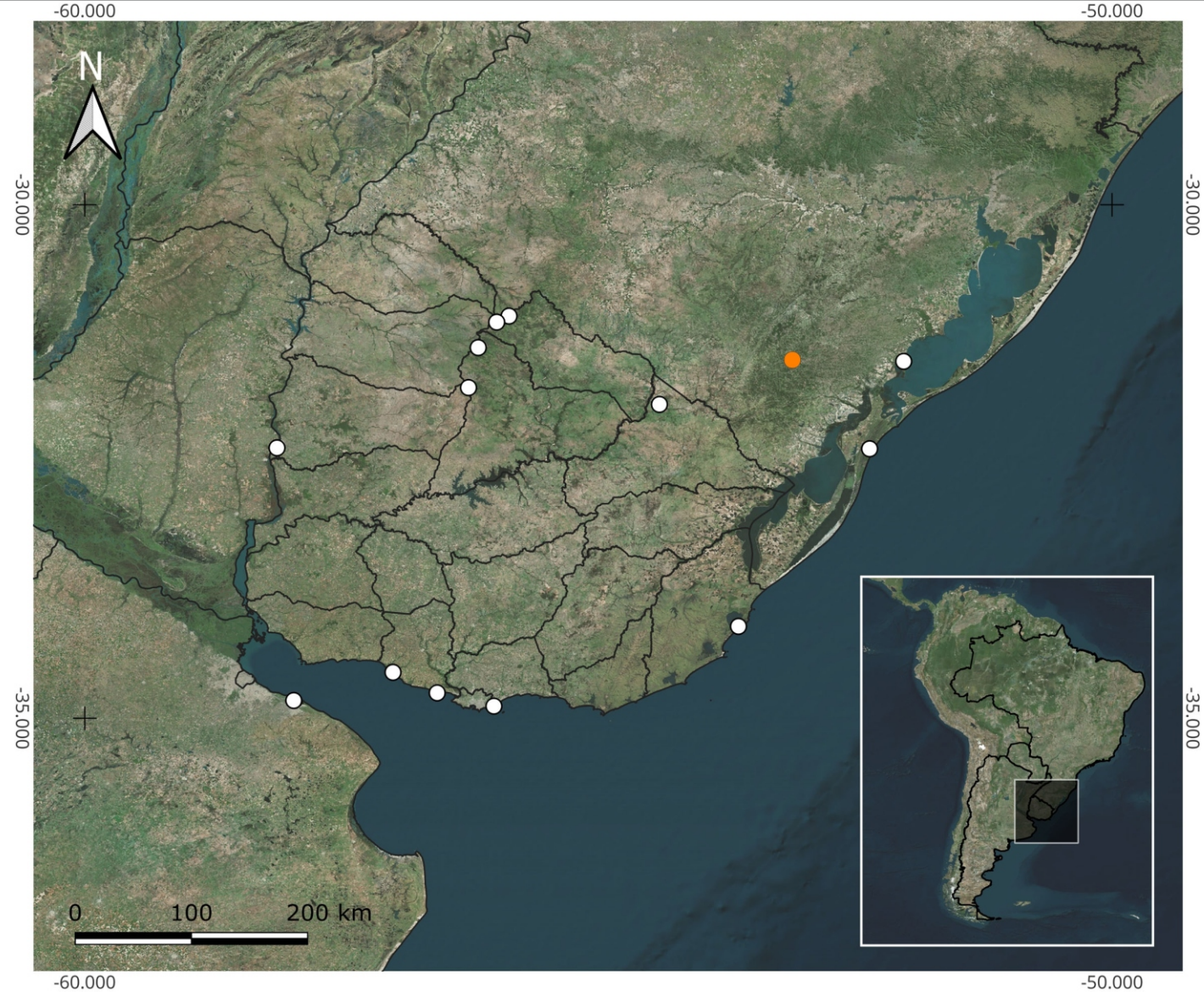


Fig. 1. Geography distribution of *Urostrophus undulatus* in South America with the respective states or departments of each country. White circles = previous records in state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; Uruguay and Punta Lara, Argentina. Orange circle = new record in the city of Piratini, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.



Fig. 2. *Urostrophus undulatus* observed in the municipality of Piratini, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on 30 November 2024. (A) Lateral view of the whole individual on a rocky outcrop. (B) Close-up of the head region, highlighting the cryptic coloration and head morphology. Photos: Wellington Vasconcelos de Souza.

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