

Philodryas agassizi (Jan, 1863) (Squamata: Dipsadidae): Distribution extension

Cristian Hernán Fulvio Perez, Mariana Morando and Luciano Javier Avila*

Centro Nacional Patagónico – Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CENPAT-CONICET), Boulevard Almirante Brown 2915, U9120ACD. Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: avila@cenpat.edu.ar

ABSTRACT: We provide the first record of *Philodryas agassizi* from Río Negro province, as well as the southernmost record from La Pampa Province, central Argentina. The record from Río Negro province extends the geographic distribution range of this species by approximately 180 km south.

Philodryas agassizi (Jan, 1863) is a medium-sized dipsadid snake (maximum SVL ~400 mm) rarely found in herpetological collections, although it is widely distributed from central and south-eastern Brazil to central Argentina and Uruguay (Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002). In Argentina it has been found in Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Chaco, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, Misiones, San Luis, Santa Fe and Santiago del Estero provinces (Gallardo 1982; Viñas *et al.* 1989; Cei 1993; Vega and Bellagamba 1994; Giraudo 1999; Arzamendia and Giraudo 2002; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002). It is considered a species typical of the Chaco phytogeographic province, also found in transitional areas with Paranaense (Campos district), Espinal and Pampeana phytogeographic provinces (Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002). Southernmost records of this species were from La Pampa and Buenos Aires provinces (Viñas *et al.* 1989; Vega and Bellagamba 1990; Tiranti and Avila 1997), with an apparent southern limit near 39° S. Here, we present two new records

south of Lihue Calel and Sierra de la Ventana Mountains (Viñas *et al.* 1989). The record from La Pampa province was obtained during a field expedition carried out on January 19, 2004 when an adult specimen of *Philodryas agassizi* (SVL = 33.5 mm, Figure 1) was collected on the northern shore of the Colorado River, along the provincial limits between La Pampa and Río Negro provinces. Collection locality is in the Lihue Calel Department, La Pampa, (38°49'00" S, 64°57'00" W), a desolate site in La Pampa province, with the closest human



FIGURE 1. *Philodryas agassizi* from the northern rocky shore of the Colorado River, Lihue Calel department, La Pampa Province, 2.3 km W Pichi Mahuida, Pichi Mahuida Department, Río Negro province, Argentina (LJAMM-CNP 4538).

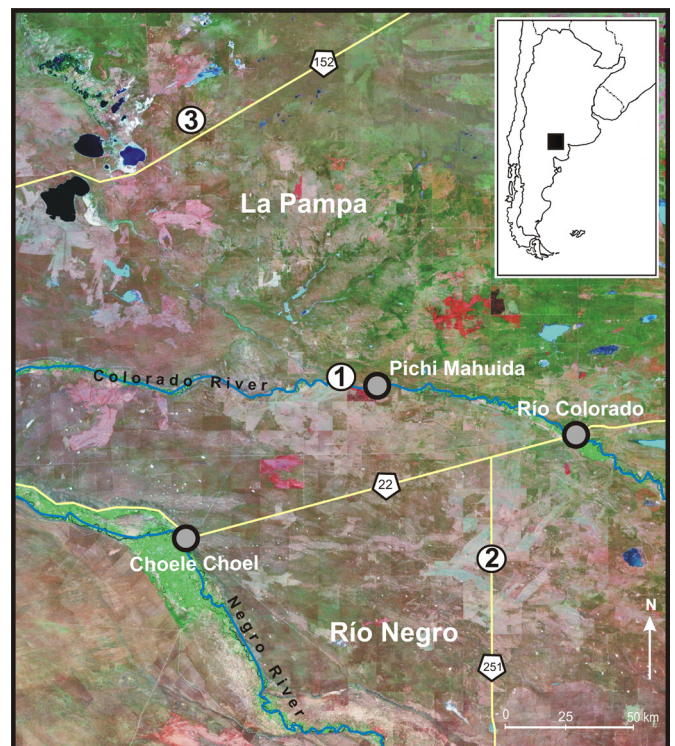


FIGURE 2. (1) new record of *Philodryas agassizi* in La Pampa Province (LJAMM-CNP 4538); (2) new record of *Philodryas agassizi* in Río Negro Province and southernmost record for the species in Argentina (LJAMM-CNP 13296); (3) locality in La Pampa province noted by Viñas *et al.* (1989). National Roads 251, 22 and 152, and main populated towns in the region are marked as reference.

settlement being Pichi Mahuida, a small village 2.3 km east and down stream, on Río Negro Province, Pichi Mahuida Department (Figure 2). This locality is situated 105.05 km (straight line distance) southeast of the Lihue Calel mountain records. A second specimen was collected dead on October 27th, 2010 on National Road 251 (39°21'00" S, 64° 25'00" W), Pichi Mahuida Department, Río Negro province (Figure 2). Distance from the previous published records in Lihue Calel National Park cited by Viñas *et al.* (1989) is more than 180 km straight line southeast, and from our new record in La Pampa province cited above is 75.6 km southwest. This is the southernmost record for *Philodryas agassizi* and the first record for Río Negro province. Both voucher specimens are deposited in the Herpetological Collection LJAMM-CNP, Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT-CONICET) under the numbers LJAMM-CNP 4538 (La Pampa record) and 13296 (Río Negro record).

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