

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Bauer, A.M. and A.P. Russell. 1993. *Aristelliger bechti*.

***Aristelliger bechti* Schwartz and Crombie**

Aristelliger bechti Schwartz and Crombie, 1975:308. Type-locality, "Little Ambergris Cay, Caicos Islands." Holotype, National Museum of Natural History (USNM) 195844, adult male, collected by D.W. Buden, 28 March 1972 (examined by authors).

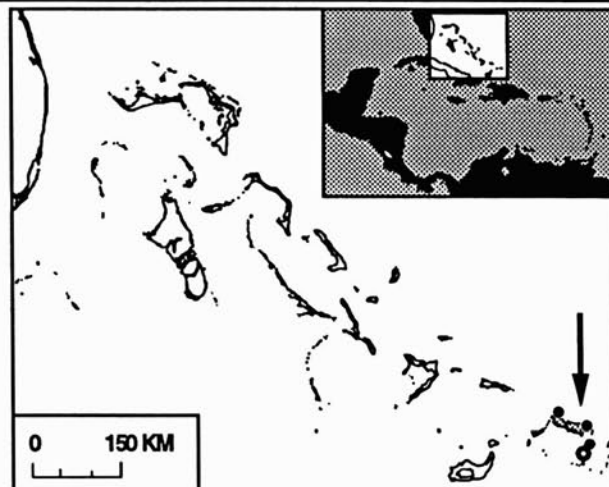
• **Content.** No subspecies are currently recognized.

• **Definition.** This species is a moderate-sized member of the genus *Aristelliger*. Males reach 90 mm SVL and females 75 mm SVL (Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The snout is short and rounded and a single enlarged, median postmental scale is present. Lamellae number 11-14 on the 4th digit of the manus and 12-16 on the 4th digit of the pes. Small, asymmetrical adhesive plates occur adjacent to the claw only on digit one of the manus and pes.

The dorsal color pattern is light green to olive or reddish tan with a pair of dark scapular ocelli surrounded by a pale ring and with a whitish central spot. The ocelli may be reduced or absent in some individuals. The head and body usually bear a reddish-tan, scalloped middorsal band or series of fused, pale rhomboids, but may be patternless. The color is slightly brighter on the tail. The venter is pale, and the palms, soles, and underside of the tail may be yellowish. The chin and throat have numerous small brown markings.

• **Diagnosis.** *Aristelliger bechti* may be distinguished from its congeners by the following combination of characters: asymmetrical adhesive plates adjacent to the claw only on digit I of the manus and pes; a single postmental scale, body robust, adult SVL 60-90 mm.

• **Descriptions.** Detailed descriptions were provided by Schwartz and Crombie (1975) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).



Map. Distribution of *Aristelliger bechti* in the Caicos Islands. The large open circle indicates the type-locality.

• **Illustrations.** The species is illustrated for the first time in this account.

• **Distribution.** *Aristelliger bechti* is restricted to the Caicos Islands, and has been found on the Six Hill Cays, Little Ambergris Cay, and North and East Caicos islands in xeric habitat in association with both natural and artificial cover. Burns et al. (1992) and Powell and Parmerlee (1992) speculated that this species may have been introduced into northern Hispaniola. A range map was provided by Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Fossil Record.** None.



Figure 1. Head and anterior trunk of an adult *Aristelliger bechti* from the Caicos Islands. Photograph courtesy of Harry W. Greene.

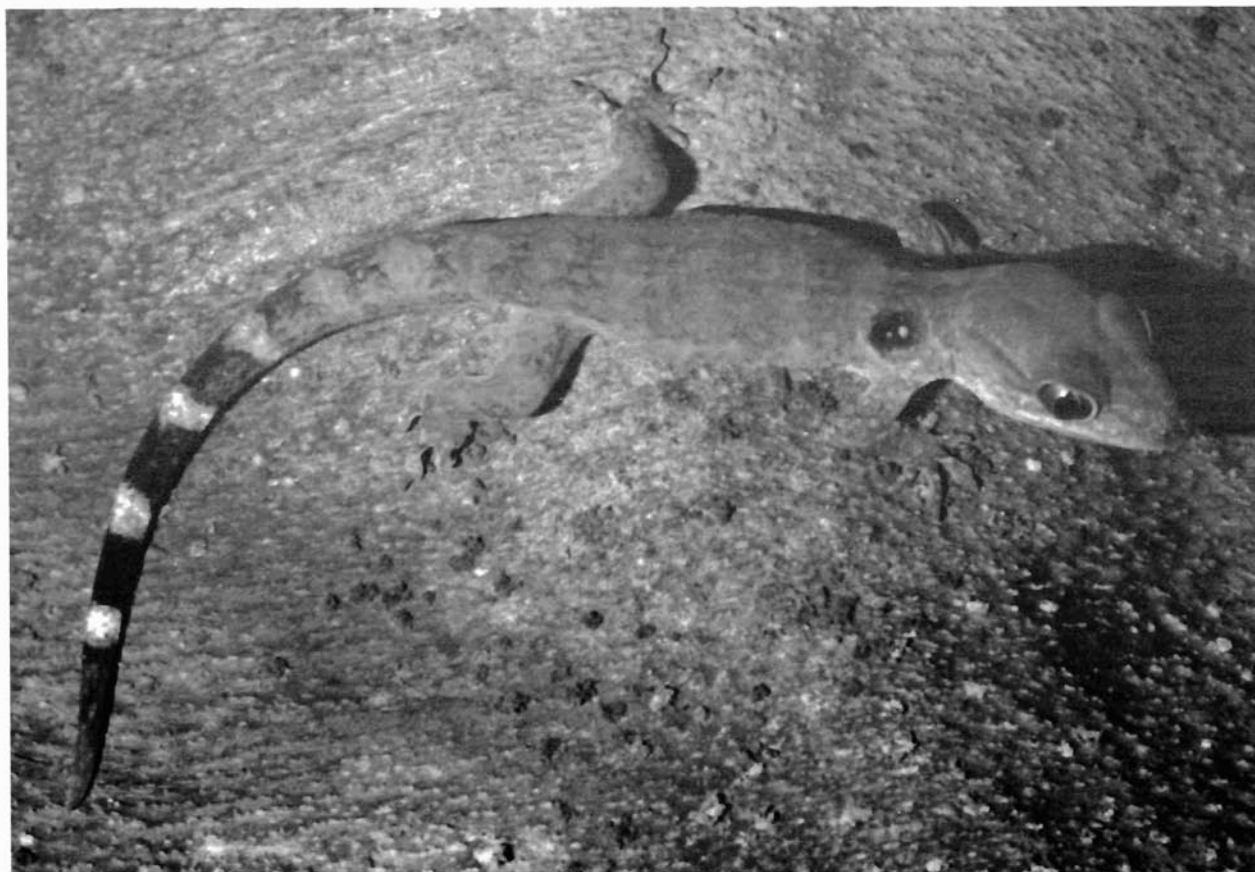


Figure 2. Juvenile *Aristelliger bechti* from the Caicos Islands. Photograph courtesy of Harry W. Greene.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Schwartz and Crombie (1975) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991) provided basic ecological information about this species, including habitat types in which it has been found. Schwartz and Crombie (1975) made some tentative statements about the relationships of this species and suggested close affinity to *A. lar* and *A. praesignis*, with a more distant shared ancestry with *A. georgeensis*. The fragile skin of this species is discussed by Greene (1988), Bauer and Russell (1992), and Bauer et al. (1992).

• **Nomenclatural History.** Hecht (1951) signaled the presence of a then undescribed species on the Caicos Islands, but provided no name, description, or diagnosis.

• **Etymology.** The specific epithet is a patronym honoring Max K. Hecht (born 1925), an important contributor to our understanding of the biology and evolution of the genus *Aristelliger*.

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