

REPTILIA: SQUAMATA: SAURIA: GEKKONIDAE *SPHAERODACTYLUS MICROPITHECUS*

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

DODD, C. KENNETH, JR. 1985. *Sphaerodactylus micropithecus*.***Sphaerodactylus micropithecus* Schwartz
Monito gecko**

Sphaerodactylus micropithecus Schwartz, 1977:986. Type-locality, "Isla Monito." Holotype, adult male, Univ. Fla./Fla. St. Mus. 21570, collected by F. G. Thompson and H. W. Campbell on May 20, 1974. Examined by author.

• CONTENT. No subspecies are recognized.

• DEFINITION. A *Sphaerodactylus* perhaps allied to the *macrolepis* complex of Puerto Rico (Schwartz, 1977). Hatchlings are approximately 14 mm snout-vent length and adults range at least to 36 mm SVL. The adult ground color is light to dark gray with a blotched pattern; juveniles are darker than adults. The tail coloration is tan to light brown. Ocelli may or may not be present in the scapular patches and, if present, are not concolor with ground coloration, but nearly white. The sacral region usually contains a well-pronounced U mark. Canthal-temporal lines are usually well-delineated and pronounced, and a scapular patch may or may not be present. There are 34-36 acute, keeled imbricate dorsal scales from axilla to groin; 51-56 midbody scales; 3 supralabial scales to mid eye; 1 internasal scale; 32-33 ventral scales from axilla to groin; males have 7 × 14 escutcheon scales. There are 25 presacral vertebrae.

• DESCRIPTION. Schwartz (1977) gives a detailed description of the preserved holotype and paratype, including scale counts and pattern. Dodd and Ortiz (1984) provide additional information on scale counts, dorsal pattern variation, coloration of living specimens, and number of presacral vertebrae.

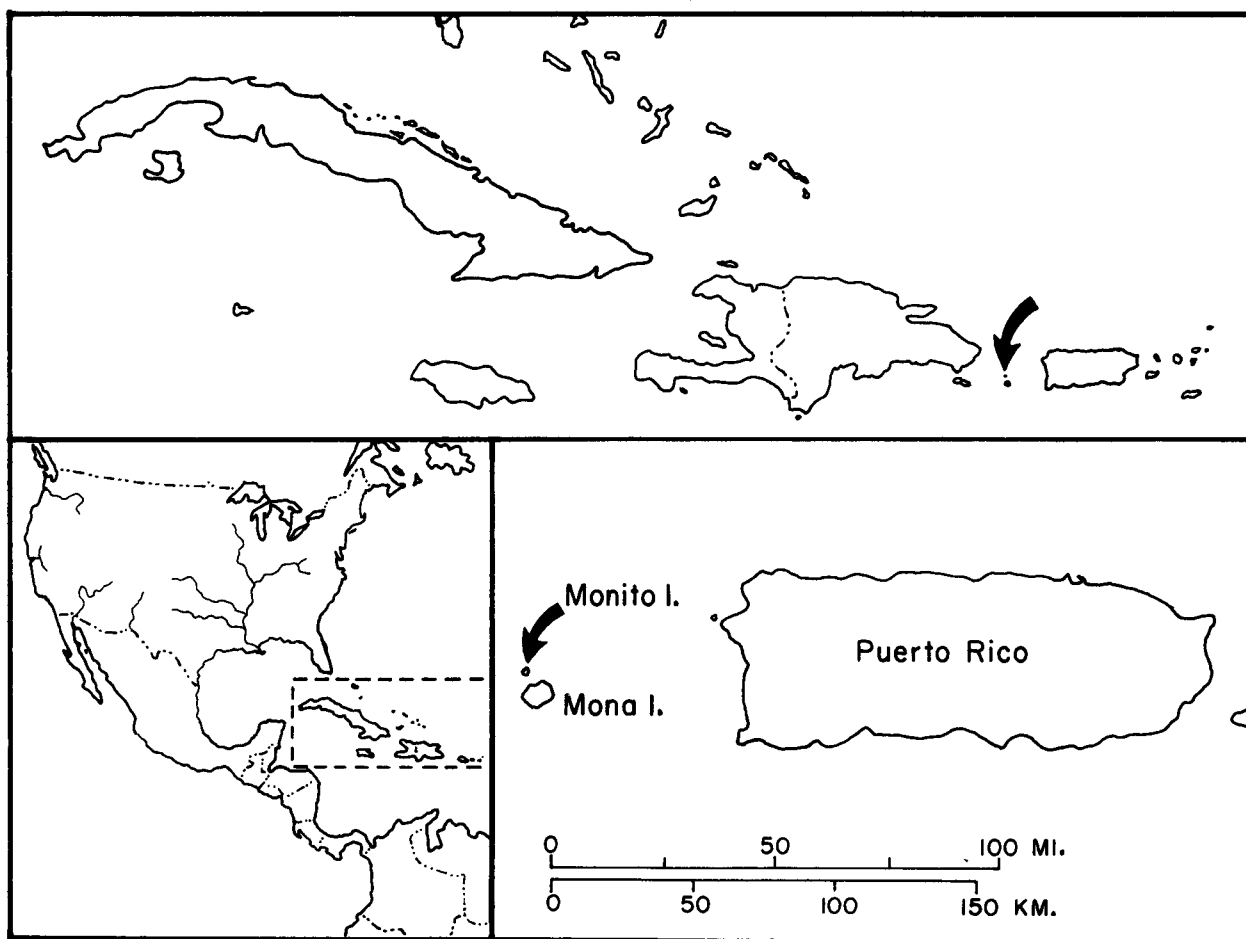
• ILLUSTRATIONS. Black and white photographs of a 36 mm male (USNM 229891) are in Dodd and Ortiz (1983) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1982). Color slides of additional living specimens are deposited with the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians, National Museum of Natural History (USNM), Washington, D.C. Schwartz (1977) and Dodd and Ortiz (1984) give line drawings of the dorsal pattern.

• DISTRIBUTION. This species is known only from Isla Monito (long. 67°10', lat. 18°10') in the Mona Passage, midway between Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. Dodd and Ortiz (1983) found the gecko only on the northeast and southwest sides of the island.

• FOSSIL RECORD. None.

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. This species was described by Schwartz (1977) on the basis of two preserved specimens; he provided detailed morphological descriptions of these specimens and compared them with geographically proximate *Sphaerodactylus* from Isla Mona and Isla Desecheo, Puerto Rico, and Hispaniola. On the basis of the comparisons and biogeographical considerations, he speculated that *S. micropithecus* was allied with the *macrolepis* complex of Puerto Rico, and a relict of a pre-Eocene fauna of Greater Puerto Rico. Dodd and Ortiz (1984) give data on morphological variation and information on the coloration of living specimens. They also noted the similarity in head pattern of *S. micropithecus* to that of *S. levinsi* of Isla Desecheo. Dodd and Ortiz (1983) discuss the results of a status survey on Monito and potential threats to the gecko, and they and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1982) review the conservation needs of the species.

• ETYMOLOGY. The name *micropithecus* is derived from the Greek *mikros*, meaning little, and *pithecus*, meaning ape. It refers to Monito, which means "little ape" in Spanish. Monito is a tiny satellite of the much larger Isla Mona, Spanish for "ape island."



MAP. Location of Isla Monito, the known range of *Sphaerodactylus micropithecus*.

COMMENT

In spite of earlier surveys of Monito (Rolle et al 1964), the Monito gecko was only discovered in 1974, and today only 6 specimens are in herpetological collections (two each in the Florida State Museum, U.S. National Museum of Natural History, Departamento de Recursos Naturales de Puerto Rico). Dodd and Ortiz (1983) reported the species from only two locations on Isla Monito. Coupled with the threats of habitat destruction (in the past, Monito has been used as a bombing target) and rat predation, the apparent scarcity of the gecko led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the species as endangered, and to determine Isla Monito as "critical habitat." A Recovery Plan is being developed which emphasizes research on the ecological requirements of the species as a prerequisite to implementing any necessary management. The remoteness and difficulty of access of Monito make study of this species extremely difficult.

LITERATURE CITED

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