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Notes on a juvenile *Celestus montanus* SCHMIDT, 1933, a rare lizard from Parque Nacional El Cusuco, Honduras

Celestus montanus SCHMIDT, 1933 was described based on a single adult female "from the mountains west of San Pedro, Honduras (the Sierra de Merendon)" at around 1,400 m elevation, a locality that is likely along Quebrada del Infierno on the eastern slope of Cerro de La Virtud, Depto. Cortés (SCHMIDT 1942; MCCRANIE & WILSON 2002). The second and third specimens, both females, were reported by WILSON et al. (1986) from a locality in southern Depto. Cortés near the eastern shore of Lago de Yojoa at 915 m elevation. This species is also known from the Guatemalan portion of the Merendón Mountains (J. CAMPBELL, pers. comm.).

On 13 July 2004, a juvenile *C. montanus* (UF 142324, deposited in the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida) was collected while it was active on the ground near a rocky stream that runs through Guanales camp (15°48'55"N / 88°23'26"W; 1,225 m elevation), Parque Nacional El Cusuco, Depto. Cortés, Honduras. Guanales camp lies in a steep-sided stream valley in primary evergreen broadleaf forest in the Premontane Wet Forest formation as defined by HOLDRIDGE (1967). This locality is less than 20 km west of the type locality, which is outside of the current boundary of P.N. El Cusuco. The type locality, while afforded some semblance of legal protection as part of the Zona Productora de Agua Cordillera de Merendón, was long ago denuded of the vegetation present when the type was collected (MCCRANIE & WILSON 2002: 412). Thus UF 142324 is the first example of *C. montanus* to demonstrate the occurrence of that species within an established protected area with intact habitat, important to note as WILSON & MCCRANIE (2004) listed *C. montanus* as a "high vulnerability species" in terms of conservation status. The fact that UF 142324 was collected on the ground is also noteworthy, as species of the genus *Celestus* tend to be regarded as either terres-

trial or arboreal in habit. The type specimen of *C. montanus* was collected "in the thatch of a ...shelter at the lower border of the cloud forest" (SCHMIDT 1933: 22), leading CAMPBELL & CAMARILLO R. (1994) to consider the species (listed as *Diploglossus montanus*) to be arboreal. WILSON et al. (1986) reported their two specimens were collected "on a hill," but did not specify the position of the animals.

This small juvenile *C. montanus* agrees well with the descriptions provided by SCHMIDT (1933), WILSON et al. (1986), and CAMPBELL & CAMARILLO R. (1994), with some exceptions noted here. The snout-to-vent length is 34.2 mm and the incomplete tail measures 36 mm. There are three prefrontals, one median and two laterals; and two rows of internasals. This specimen is apparently unique among known examples of *C. montanus* in having two small scales irregularly positioned between the anterior internasals and the rostral; the nasal contacts the rostral. Differing from SCHMIDT's (1933) original description, the frontal is more than two times as long as it is wide. The interparietal is equal to or slightly smaller than the size of the parietals. There are three loreals; five supraoculars, with supraocular two and three contacting the frontal; four postoculars; 10 and 11 supralabials, with supralabials seven and eight being directly below the orbit on both sides; and eight infralabials. The lower postnasal contacts the third supralabial. There are 34 scales around the body, and 71 scales along the dorsal midline. The fourth toe has 24 subdigital lamellae.

The color after two months in preservative is as follows: dorsal surfaces olive green, dorsal surface of head somewhat darker; supralabials dark gray-brown towards upper edges, pale cream towards lower edges, with a black line along the posterior edges; dark gray mottling on lateral surfaces between the head and forelimbs, with some infusion of pale blue from the ventral surface in the lateral gular region; lateral surfaces of body with some well defined and some poorly defined ocelli, increasing in number anteriorly; dorsal surface of limbs mottled brown and black; ventral surface of body pale blue; dorsal

surface of tail copper-infused green with some black flecks and subcaudal surface orange-tinted towards distal portion.

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