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Reptile fauna of the Chancaní Reserve (Arid Chaco, Argentina): species list and conservation status

The Chancaní Provincial Reserve (65°26' W / 30°22' S, 49,200 ha) is the only remaining well preserved relict of the Arid Chaco woodland in central-western Argentina (60,000 km²), and the driest portion of the Chaco transitional with the Monte ecoregion and the western Chaco (CABRERA & WILLINK 1980). The Arid Chaco has been severely degraded by deforestation, overgrazing, and land degradation (BUCHER & SCHOFIELD 1981). This Reserve protects typical Arid Chaco vegetation with smaller fragments of sierra Chaco. Dominant vegetation is characterized by a deciduous, thorny woodland. Canopy (15 m height) is discontinuous, dominated by *Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco* and *Prosopis* spp. The shrub stratum (4 m) is almost continuous in cover, dominated by *Larrea divaricata*, *Mymozyanthus carinatus*, and *Acacia* spp. The grass and herb understory is well developed, in contrast with the neighboring degraded areas (CABIDO & PACHA 2002).

Here we report a list of reptiles that occur in the Reserve. Data were collected using a combination of field observations (during day and night), drift fence funnel traps (LEYNAUD & BUCHER 2005) and bibliographic sources. Field work extended for 375 days (2004-2005). Specimens captured were released immediately afterwards.

We trapped nine lizard species (seven families), one amphisbaenid species, and ten

snake species (four families). *Teius teyou* and *Stenocercus doellojuradoi* (lizards), and *Waglerophis merremi*, *Micrurus pyrrhocryptus* and *Crotalus durissus terrificus* (snakes) were the most abundant species in each group (table 1). Field observations added three lizards (*Tropidurus spinulosus*, *Liolaemus* sp. aff. *gracilis* and *Vanzosaura rubricauda*) and one snake species (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*) and bibliographic sources added one turtle and one snake species (table 1).

We assigned the conservation status categories provided by Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable – Ministerio de Salud y Ambiente (2004). Accordingly, the lizard fauna of the Chancaní Reserve includes two species considered as “vulnerable” (*Cnemidophorus serranus* and *Leiosaurus paronae*, and one Chaco endemic species (*Stenocercus doellojuradoi*) (LEYNAUD & BUCHER 2005). The snake fauna includes one “vulnerable” species (*Epicrates cenchria alvarezii*), and one “threatened” species (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*). The only turtle species found in the Reserve (*Chelonoidis chilensis*) is categorized as “in danger of extinction”.

Diversity of Chancaní’s reptile fauna is low if compared with other sites in the western Chaco. Lizard species richness found in the Chancaní Reserve (12 species) is about half of that found in Salta, the northern border of the Arid Chaco in Argentina (19 species, eight species in common) (CRUZ et al. 1992; LAVILLA et al. 1995; LEYNAUD & BUCHER 2005). Regarding ophidians, 25 snake species were recorded in Salta (CRUZ et al. 1992; LAVILLA et al. 1995; LEYNAUD & BUCHER 2005), whereas only 12 were found in Chancaní, 11 of which are common to both sites. Three turtle species occur in Salta (LAVILLA et al. 1995), of which only the terrestrial turtle *Ch. chilensis* is shared with Chancaní. This pattern is consistent with Chancaní being located at the drier and colder, southernmost portion of the Chaco.

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Table 1: List of lizards (L), amphisbaenids (A), snakes (S) and turtles (T) of Chancani Reserve (Arid Chaco, Argentina). N – number of the authors' records by capture in the study period.

Family / Species	Record source	N	Conservation status
Amphisbaenidae (A)			
<i>Amphisbaena bolivica</i> MERTENS, 1929	Capture	1	Not threatened
Teiidae (L)			
<i>Cnemidophorus serranus</i> CEI & MARTORI, 1991	Capture	1	Vulnerable
<i>Teius teyou</i> (DAUDIN, 1802)	Capture, Observation	226	Not threatened
<i>Tupinambis rufescens</i> (GÜNTHER, 1871)	Capture, Observation	5	Not threatened
Tropiduridae (L)			
<i>Stenocercus doellojuradoi</i> (FREIBERG, 1944)	Capture, Observation	143	Insufficiently known
<i>Tropidurus etheridgei</i> CEI, 1982	Capture, Observation	4	Not threatened
<i>Tropidurus spinulosus</i> (COPE, 1862)	Observation	0	Not threatened
Liolaemidae (L)			
<i>Liolaemus chacoensis</i> SHREVE, 1948	Capture, Observation	3	Not threatened
<i>Liolaemus</i> sp. aff. <i>gracilis</i> (BELL, 1843)	Observation	0	Insufficiently known
Leiosauridae (L)			
<i>Leiosaurus paronae</i> (PERACCA, 1897)	Capture, Observation	17	Vulnerable
Scincidae (L)			
<i>Mabuya dorsivittata</i> COPE, 1862	Capture	5	Not threatened
Geckonidae (L)			
<i>Homonota fasciata</i> (DUMÉRIL & BIBRON, 1839)	Capture, Observation	17	Not threatened
Gymnophthalmidae (L)			
<i>Vanzosaura rubricauda</i> (BOULENGER, 1902)	Observation	0	Not threatened
Colubridae (S)			
<i>Boiruna maculata</i> (BOULENGER, 1896)	Capture, Observation	2	Not threatened
<i>Echinanthera occipitalis</i> (JAN, 1863)	(GIRAUDO 1997)	0	Not threatened
<i>Lystrophis pulcher</i> (JAN, 1863)	Capture, Observation	3	Not threatened
<i>Oxyrhopus rhombifer bachmanni</i> (WEYENBERGH, 1876)	Capture	3	Not threatened
<i>Phimophis vittatus</i> (BOULENGER, 1896)	Capture	4	Not threatened
<i>Philodryas psammophideus</i> GÜNTHER, 1872	Capture, Observation	4	Not threatened
<i>Waglerophis merremi</i> (WAGLER, 1824)	Capture, Observation	11	Not threatened
Crotalidae (S)			
<i>Bothrops newiedii diporus</i> COPE, 1862	Capture	5	Not threatened
<i>Crotalus durissus terrificus</i> (LAURENTI, 1768)	Capture	7	Not threatened
Boidae (S)			
<i>Epicrates cenchría alvarezii</i> ABALOS, BAEZ & NADER, 1964	Capture	3	Vulnerable
<i>Boa constrictor occidentalis</i> PHILIPPI, 1873	Observation	0	Threatened
Elapidae (S)			
<i>Micrurus pyrrhocryptus</i> (COPE, 1862)	Capture, Observation	9	Not threatened
Testudinidae (T)			
<i>Chelonoidis chilensis</i> (GRAY, 1870)	(CABRERA 1998)	0	In danger

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KEY WORDS: Reptiles, Reptilia, species diversity, reptile fauna, conservation, Arid Chaco, Argentina, Chancani Reserve

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