

based on his many years of experience in working with this species. The City of Lake Forest Parks and Recreation provided the opportunity for me to work with these unusual animals. Pine Tree Pet Store in Libertyville has been my source

for high quality husbandry equipment to give these animals the best in care. The Corner Store in Diamond Lake has been my source for high quality feeder minnows to keep my snakes in tip-top shape.

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The Introduced Mediterranean Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*) in North-central New Mexico

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The Mediterranean gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*) is an Old World lizard that has become widely established in the United States since the early 1900s. The species is almost exclusively associated with human dwellings, which has facilitated its introduction to new locations. Geckos or their eggs are frequently transported as stowaways in cargo, although the intentional release of specimens also has occurred at many sites; both means of introduction are examples of jump dispersal via human intervention (Locey and Stone, 2006). Most populations in the United States are in the southeastern part of the country, particularly along the Gulf Coast (Conant and Collins, 1991). However, *H. turcicus* is also known from other sites as far west as southern California and southern Nevada (Stebbins, 2003), southern and northwestern Arizona (Brennan and Holycross, 2006), and western Texas (Conant and Collins, 1991; Price, 1980). The species also has been reported as far north as eastern Kansas (Hare, 2006).

In New Mexico, the Mediterranean gecko was first discovered at Las Cruces, Doña Ana County in 1991 (Painter et al.,

1992), and may be expanding its range within that city (Degenhardt et al., 1996). Small populations were subsequently found in two other cities in southern New Mexico: Truth or Consequences, Sierra County in 1999 (Sias and Humphrey, 2002); and Alamogordo, Otero County in 2001 (Murray and Painter, 2003). The purpose of this note is to document the presence of *H. turcicus* at two sites in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, which is currently the northernmost verified location for this species in New Mexico.

One of the authors (M. Byers) first observed *H. turcicus* in fall 2004 on the stucco exterior walls of his home in the north-eastern quadrant of Albuquerque (UTM coordinates: 13S 0361201, 3884690). Geckos were not seen during the previous eight years that he was resident at the house. He and family members have made at least eight observations of geckos at this location over a two-year period; the most recent was a hatchling found on 31 October 2006. Most of the observed individuals appeared to be juveniles (20–30 mm snout-vent length [SVL]; based on size information in Degenhardt et al., 1996), although one adult or subadult (> 40 mm SVL) was also captured and temporarily held in captivity in 2006 (M. Byers, personal observation). In June 2006, J. Stuart examined a recently captured subadult specimen (ca. 40 mm SVL) from the Byers home, and also examined a white, hard-shelled gecko egg that was discovered within a stack of bricks in the corner of the garage. A second egg was present but accidentally broken when the nesting site was discovered earlier in June. A juvenile gecko (ca. 25 mm SVL), captured at the residence in late September 2006, is illustrated in Figure 1. The source of this *H. turcicus* population is not known.

A second known occurrence of *H. turcicus* is at a residence in the northwestern quadrant of Albuquerque (UTM coordinates: 13S 0350356, 3888276; D. Sias, personal observation). Geckos at this site are apparently descended from several small introductions, the most recent being of four specimens released



Figure 1. A juvenile *Hemidactylus turcicus* (circa 25 mm SVL) from northeastern Albuquerque, New Mexico. One-cent coin provided for scale. Photograph by M. McKinley.

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in September 1999. All of the released geckos were obtained from the established population in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Although this Albuquerque site has not been closely monitored, geckos apparently have persisted there for about seven years, an indication of successful reproduction. The most recent sighting of *H. turcicus* at this location was of a large adult (> 120 mm total length) that was observed by D. Sias on an exterior wall of the residence for about three hours on the evening of 18 July 2006. The gecko had a large, thick tail and appeared to be in good physical condition.

Both Albuquerque sites are in long-established suburban neighborhoods with many nearby buildings that presumably also offer suitable habitat. However, we have no evidence that geckos have migrated beyond these single residences through the process of diffusion dispersal (i.e., movement into nearby and unoccupied suitable habitat without human intervention). Based on a recent study of *H. turcicus* in Oklahoma, the diffusion dispersal rate in this species is very low and colonization of new areas occurs almost exclusively by jump dispersal with

human assistance (Locey and Stone, 2006).

Albuquerque regularly experiences subfreezing temperatures in winter; therefore, it is likely that geckos at both locations use refugia on or inside buildings to survive cold weather. The elevations at the two Albuquerque locations (1700 m at the northeast site; 1504 m at the northwest site) are probably higher than any other place where *H. turcicus* occurs in the United States, including the three locations in southern New Mexico, which range from approximately 1200 m (Las Cruces mean elevation) to 1480 m (Truth or Consequences mean elevation). It is possible that the high-elevation climate in north-central New Mexico could limit future dispersal of this species in the Albuquerque metropolitan area.

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Recent Sale of the Most Spectacular Herpetological Medal Produced by the U.S. Mint

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Chiszar and Smith (2005) described herpetological medals produced by the U.S. Mint, and we illustrated one in particular that was awarded by Congress to Major General Zachary

Taylor in 1848 (actually presented in 1849) for his service in the war with Mexico at the Battle of Buena Vista (February 1847). We had seen only a bronze specimen of this medal (see

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