Nicaragua’s herpetofauna is in general poorly known. During the last one and a half decade several research attempts have increased Nicaragua’s checklist both in total number of species and in number of endemic species, as well as provided distribution extensions for several species (Köhler 2001; 2004; Köhler and McCranie 1999; Köhler et al. 2004; Sunyer and Köhler 2007; 2010; Sunyer et al. 2009; 2010; 2011; Salazar and Barquero 2012). However a detailed picture of the distribution of each species present in the country is far from being completed and extensive field research is still required.

Gymnophthalmus speciosus (Hallowell 1861) is a small lizard included within the family Gymnophthalmidae. The genus Gymnophthalmus Merrem 1820, contains a total of eight species, based on Avila-Pires (1995) and Savage (2002). In Central America we find a single representative of species of the genus, G. speciosus (Fig 1). This microtoid lizard is unmistakable in Nicaragua because it has a combination of the following characteristics: a) four fingers on its forelimbs, instead of five; b) absence of movable eyelids, c) presence of a usually red colored tail; and d) presence of nasal scales separated by front nasal scales.

Gymnophthalmus speciosus is distributed from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec: from southern Mexico, at the Pacific ocean, to Colombia, and from northeastern Guatemala, at the Atlantic ocean, to Venezuela, as well as in Guyana, between sea level and 1220 m(Savage 2002, Köhler 2008). It is the only species of the family of Gymnophthalmidae whose distribution reaches beyond northern Costa Rica. It was described as Blepharactisis speciosa (Hallowell 1861) being its type locality “Nicaragua” generically, not being too informative about its particular distribution. Additionally, Cope (1871) described Tretioscincus laeviscaudus in Nicaragua, a current synonym of *G. speciosus*. This species is considered „rare“ in Nicaragua (Ruiz and Buitrago 2003) and, mostly due to the lack of field exploration, the knowledge about its distribution in the country is very limited. So far, there are a few Nicaraguan museum specimens that are mostly kept in museums in the U.S.A. and Germany, and some of them does not include detailed geographic collecting information. The lack of field surveys and studies on this species in which compiled both historical data and new records for the country, prevented reflection in a real way on the status of the species in Nicaragua. Köhler (2001) cited this particular species in two localities in Nicaragua, despite estimating its potential distribution range along the country’s entire lowlands (Köhler 2008). Recent field work throughout Nicaragua has uncovered new populations of this species in the country (see Figs. 1 and 2, Table 1 and Appendix). Most specimens were located usually under dry tree trunks and fallen leaves, although they can also be found above them (Ferrer and González 2007).

These new records support the wide distribution of *G. speciosus* in the lowlands of Nicaragua, particularly along the Pacific slope, being of particular interest records in those departments where the existence of this species was not previously reported. In addition to the new records herein presented (see Table 1 and Fig. 1), there are sightings of this species in the lowlands of Momotombo volcano (Depto. León; com. pers. J. A. Orozco y C. A. Sánchez-Ramos), in a dormant crater of Masaya volcano (Depto. Masaya; com. pers. J. G. Martínez-Fonseca), and near the city of León (Environmental Botanical Garden of UNAN-León, Depto. León; com. pers. M. Salazar-Saavedra).

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References


New distribution records of *Gymnophthalmus speciosus*

### Table 1. New records of *Gymnophthalmus speciosus* in Nicaragua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Geographical Coordinates (Long/Lat)</th>
<th>Elevation (m asl)</th>
<th>Nº Voucher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carazo</td>
<td>Dolores, Finca Concepción de María</td>
<td>11.860811 86.207858</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Carazo</td>
<td>2 km SE Santa Teresa de Carazo</td>
<td>11.735611 86.132811</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>JS 2352–53</td>
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<td>Chinandega</td>
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<td>12.882924 87.538614</td>
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<td>Jinotega</td>
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<td>13.62927 85.71976</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>León</td>
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<td>Las Nubes</td>
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<td>11.382794 86.025122</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>


Salazar, M., Barquero M. D. (2012). First country records for *Urotheca decipiens* and *Urotheca pachyura* and range extensions of *Urotheca guentheri* in Nicaragua. Herpetological Bulletin 121: 30–32.


Appendix

Historical records:


Accepted by Zoltan T. Nagy