

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN GECKO (*HEMIDACTYLUS TURCICUS*) IN TEXAS

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The Mediterranean Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*) is a small (10 – 12.7 cm total length) nocturnal gekkonid lizard native to southern Europe, northern Africa, and far-west Asia. It has been introduced to many areas outside its native range and has established numerous populations throughout the United States. The first report of *H. turcicus* from Texas was from Cameron County in 1955. Since then, *H. turcicus* has become established throughout much of the state and new county occurrence records continue to be published regularly. Despite the efforts of numerous herpetologists, the distribution of *H. turcicus* within Texas remains poorly known. The last county-delineated state-wide distribution map was published in 2013 and was promptly made obsolete with the publication of 16 Texas county records in 2014. In total, 55 Texas county records have been published for *H. turcicus* since the last state-wide distribution map was printed. We provide an updated state-wide distribution map and report on our efforts to elucidate the distribution of *H. turcicus* in Texas. From 2019 – 2021, we travelled to 23 Texas counties to search for *H. turcicus*. Nocturnal surveys were conducted in each county around anthropogenic structures in urban habitats. Mediterranean geckos were found in 21 counties and voucher specimens were deposited at the Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center at the University of Texas at Arlington. Our findings demonstrate substantial range expansion of *H. turcicus* in Texas. Further surveys should be conducted throughout the state as conspicuous gaps in our distribution map exist. Special attention should be given to *H. turcicus* populations occupying semi-natural habitats in west Texas and determining interactions between this non-native lizard and the native herpetofauna.