



INTRODUCED SPECIES

Thecadactylus rapicauda on Mosquito Island, British Virgin Islands

 Clive Petrovic¹ and Gad Perry²
¹Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands (clivep@surfbvi.com)

²Department of Natural Resource Management, Box 42125, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-2125, USA (Gad.Perry@ttu.edu)

The Turnip-tailed Gecko (*Thecadactylus rapicauda*) is found in tropical areas of Central and South America and the Lesser Antilles, with a few populations documented from the Greater Puerto Rico Bank (Russell and Bauer 2002). In the British Virgin Islands it is known to occur only on Necker Island, a private resort owned by Sir Richard Branson (Lazell 1995, 2006; Perry and Gerber 2011a). Some of the

West Indian range might represent human introductions (Henderson and Powell 2009). On Necker, these geckos are common commensals, most frequently seen in and around human structures (Lazell 1995, 2006; Henderson and Powell 2009). The Turnip-tailed Gecko often enters homes elsewhere within its range as well (e.g., Vitt and Zani 1997, Henderson and Powell 2009) and has repeatedly been documented feeding at night-lights (Perry et al. 2008).

On 11 January 2012, an adult gecko was captured on Mosquito (sometimes spelled Moskito), an island close to Necker and also owned by Sir Richard Branson. Furniture has recently been moved from Necker to Mosquito, presumably providing an opportunity for stowaways. A photographic voucher is deposited in the Texas Natural History Collections (TNHC 85164) and the species' identity was confirmed from that photograph by T. LaDuc. A second individual was captured in May 2012.

Mosquito Island is home to a number of native species, including the narrowly-distributed *Sphaerodactylus parthenopion* (Perry and Gerber 2011b). In Trinidad and Tobago, native *Sphaerodactylus* are part of the diet of the widespread *T. rapicauda* (Murphy 1997), and vertebrate prey have also been documented elsewhere (Henderson and Powell 2009). Establishment of *T. rapicauda* on Mosquito would therefore be undesirable.

Acknowledgements

We thank the owners of Mosquito and Necker islands for access. This is publication number T-9-1223 of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Texas Tech University.

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An adult female *Thecadactylus rapicauda* captured on Mosquito Island, British Virgin Islands. The tail is readily lost in this species, and tearing of the skin is also a common defensive strategy. Photograph by Clive Petrovic.

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