



INTRODUCED SPECIES

New County Record For The Veiled Chameleon, *Chamaeleo calyptratus* Duméril and Bibron 1851 (Sauria: Chamaeleonidae), in Florida

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Photograph by the senior author.

The Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus* Duméril and Bibron 1851) is a diurnal and arboreal lizard species indigenous to the Asir Province in southwestern Saudi Arabia to Aden in Yemen, where it lives on high, dry plateaus at elevations to 2,800 m and in foothills, forests, low-elevation maize fields, and inland river valleys (Fritz and Schütte 1987, Meerman and Boomsma 1987, Zari 1993, Showler 1995,

Schmidt 2001). *Chamaeleo calyptratus* is common in the pet trade, and has been intentionally and illegally introduced to the United States in Hawaii (Kraus and Duvall 2004, Kraus 2009) and Florida (Krysko et al. 2004). In Florida, this species is known to have been independently introduced to at least four sites, including Alachua, Collier, Hendry, and Lee counties (Enge 2008; Krysko et al. 2004, 2011b). Herein, we



In situ photograph of adult Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*) sleeping on a Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*) in Homestead, Miami-Dade County, Florida, on 10 April 2012.

document a new introduction of this species in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

On 10 April 2012 at 2145 h, CRG found an adult male *Chamaeleo calytratus* (photographic voucher UF 166817). The identity of the lizard was confirmed by Max A. Nickerson, Christopher V. Anderson, and Robert H. Robins. The chameleon was sleeping in a hedge of Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*) about 1.2 m above the ground on SW 212th Avenue, 0.06 km north of SW 352nd Street, Homestead, Miami-Dade County, Florida (25.440825°N, 80.533807°W, Datum WGS84, 2 m elevation). This individual likely was released or had escaped from an enclosure at a nearby reptile facility because (1) this species does not have known established populations in areas leading to the site; (2) the closest known specimen locality is ca. 139 km northeast in Golden Gate, Collier County (photographic voucher UF 140472; Krysko et al. 2011b); and (3) the pet trade is the most common introduction pathway for introduced herpetofauna in Florida (Krysko et al. 2011a). Because applicable laws are difficult to enforce and both residents and legal authorities often are unconcerned, the ever-increasing trend of introduced herpetofauna in Florida continues.

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