

INTRODUCED SPECIES

The Gold Dust Day Gecko, *Phelsuma laticauda* (Boettger 1880) (Squamata: Gekkonidae), in the Florida Keys

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Photographs by the senior author.

The Gold Dust Day Gecko, *Phelsuma laticauda* (Boettger 1880), is indigenous to northern Madagascar and several Indian Ocean islands (Henkel and Schmidt 2000, Lever 2003, Glaw and Vences 2007, Rocha et al. 2010). It has been introduced in the Comoros, French Polynesia, and the United States in the Hawaiian Islands and Florida (McKeown 1996, Ota and Ineich 2006, Kraus 2009, Krysko et al. 2011a). This diurnal and arboreal species reaches 58 mm SVL and 130 mm TL (Henkel and Schmidt 2000, Rocha et al. 2010) and

is characterized by being a non-gluer (its eggs are not adhered to a substrate) with smooth ventral and subcaudal scales, three nasalia, no nostril to rostral contact, and a bright green dorsum that lacks dorsal or lateral stripes (Rocha et al. 2010). It is edificarian and inhabits fences, walls, gardens, and tall growing plants such as palms (Henkel and Schmidt 2000).

On 15 August 2012 at 945 h, we observed two adult *Phelsuma laticauda* (Fig. 1) on Stock Island, Monroe County, Florida (24.5725°N, 81.7406°W, datum WGS84, elev. < 1



Fig. 1. Gold Dust Day Geckos, *Phelsuma laticauda* (*in situ*; UF photographic vouchers 168519, left, and 168520, right, respectively), found on Stock Island, Monroe County, Florida, on 15 August 2012.

m). These geckos were observed near a building feeding on ants (Hymenoptera) next to multiple native Green (*Anolis carolinensis*) and non-native Brown Anoles (*A. sagrei*). We were unable to determine the sexes of these two geckos and the extent of this potential population because they were in a dense stand of vegetation consisting of a mixture of non-native Screw Pine (*Pandanus* sp.), native Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*) and White Mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*) trees, of which we were able to search only about 3 m of the margin. This species likely was released or had escaped (i.e., introduced; stage 2 following Colautti and MacIsaac 2004). Although *P. laticauda* has been introduced (with no current evidence of establishment) to other areas on the Florida mainland (see Krysko et al. 2011a), our observations represent the first known vouchers for this species in the Florida Keys. Twenty-four known species of geckos have been introduced into Florida (Krysko et al. 2011a), of which at least 14 are believed to be established (Krysko et al. 2011a, 2011b; Meshaka 2011).

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