



INTRODUCED SPECIES

# First Record of a Brown Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) in The Bahamas

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On 3 February 2021, I received a message via Facebook from Adam Boorman, the nursery manager at the Fox Hill Nursery on New Providence, The Bahamas (25°03'1.26"N, 77°18'31.46"W), about a strange lizard found in a shipping container carrying plant products from Florida. The lizard was found and captured by Jerome Mackey, a Fox Hill Nursery staff member who was inspecting the container for possible stowaways. Based on photographs (Fig. 1), I informed the manager and staff

members that the lizard was a large adult female Brown Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus* Wiegmann 1828). César Luis Barrio Amorós, Kenneth L. Krysko, and Coleman Sheehy III confirmed the identity of the species from photographs. A photographic voucher was deposited in the University of Florida Museum of Natural History (UF-Herpetology 191407). The lizard was later euthanized.

Brown Basilisks range from southern Mexico to Ecuador, where they inhabit tropical and subtropical forests (Krysko



**Fig. 1.** An adult female Brown Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) captured at the Fox Hill Nursery on New Providence, The Bahamas. Photograph by Scott Johnson.

et al. 2006; Stroud and Giery 2016). It was first recorded in Florida in 1964 by King and Krakauer (1966) and has since become established in peninsular Florida and later in the Florida Keys (Krysko et al. 2006, 2019; Greene et al. 2012).

The first record of a basilisk in The Bahamas was a lizard captured by Vernard Bain, a staff member of Ardastra Gardens Zoo on New Providence, in 2010 (S.D. Buckner, in litt., 7 February 2021). Bain asserted that it was a Western Basilisk (*Basiliscus galeritus*) based on personal research but that identification was never confirmed. Buckner et al. (2012) recorded the animal as *Basiliscus* sp. and as a waif. This note represents the first confirmed record of a Brown Basilisk in The Bahamas and in the West Indies.

Shipping containers are known to aid the dispersal of non-native species (Powell et al. 2011). These containers, especially those with ornamental plants, often are not adequately inspected, and non-native animals could be hiding in, for example, the root balls of plants, plant pots, or even soil. Fortunately, some companies, like the Fox Hill Nursery, do their best to mitigate against the spread of exotic organisms by checking products in containers before unloading them.

#### Acknowledgements

I thank Adam Boorman and the Fox Hill Nursery staff for actively inspecting their containers for stowaways and seek-

ing professional advice when finding novel creatures, Sandra Buckner for her assistance with historical information on the basilisk found previously on New Providence, and Kenneth L. Krysko and Coleman Sheehy III for facilitating the deposition of the photographic voucher.

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