



INTRODUCED SPECIES

New Distributional Records of the Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus* Duméril and Bibron 1851) in Palm Beach County, Florida

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The state of Florida, USA, has more introduced species of herpetofauna than any other region in the world — and 75% of Florida’s lizard species are nonnative (Krysko et al. 2016). The Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*) is native to Yemen and Saudi Arabia and has been introduced to Alachua, Hendry, Lee, Collier, Miami-Dade, Broward, and St. Lucie Counties (Krysko et al. 2004, 2011; Enge 2008; Gillette and Krysko 2012; Edwards et al. 2014; Dalaba et al. 2019). Herein we report a breeding population of *C. calyptratus* in an eighth Florida county. We submitted photographic vouchers and physical specimens to the Florida Museum of Natural History (UF-Herpetology collection) and Dr. Coleman Sheehy III confirmed the species identity.

At 0947 h on 5 December 2020, we collected an adult male *C. calyptratus* (UF-Herpetology 191361; Fig. 1) that was perched on a Castor Bean Tree (*Ricinus communis*) at Northwest Park, Lake Worth Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida (26.64321°N, -80.06350°W). At 1631 h on 12 December 2020, EFM collected a second adult male *C. calyptratus* (UF-Herpetology 191362) perched on a Castor Bean Tree (26.64355°N, -80.06331°W). At 1635 h on 13 December 2020, we collected a third adult male *C. calyptratus* (UF-Herpetology 191363) perched on a Carrotwood Tree (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*) along the C-51 canal (26.644671°N, -80.06352°W). On 16 December 2020, we conducted a nighttime survey and collected 13 additional *C.*



Fig. 1. An adult male Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*) (photographic voucher UF-Herpetology 191361) removed from Northwest Park, Palm Beach County, Florida, USA (26.64321°N, -80.06350°W) on 5 December 2020. Photograph by Edward F. Metzger III.



Fig. 2. A juvenile female Veiled Chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*) (photographic voucher UF-Herpetology 191376) removed from Northwest Park, Palm Beach County, Florida, USA (26.64375°N, -80.06357°W) on 16 December 2020. Photograph by Edward F. Metzger III.

calyptratus (UF-Herpetology 191364–76) consisting of adults and juveniles (Fig. 2) of both sexes. The last observation is indicative of an established population.

Northwest Park is an approximately 14-ha park that consists primarily of sports fields bordered by a canal, a small industrial area, and a suburban residential community. We found chameleons in approximately 2 ha of disturbed habitat adjacent to a staging area for vegetation and construction debris. The chameleons might have been introduced to the area as stowaways among these materials, but a known history of intentional introductions of chameleons in southern Florida (see Rochford et al. 2013; Edwards et al. 2014) suggests that this population is likely the result of intentional human introduction for the pet trade or recreational herping. The site is not adjacent to any natural areas, but chameleons may be dispersed with debris and the potential for secondary introductions into natural areas is a concern.

Acknowledgement

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