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> FIELD GUIDE **REPTILES** OF THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF CHILE

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GUÍA DE CAMPO/ FIELD GUIDE

REPTILES

Chile is a diverse country, owing to its steep topographical reach from sea level to 6,893 masl (22,615 ft) in the Andes, and to its incredible north-south extension from latitude 17° to 56° south (not counting the Chilean Antarctic Territory), or 4,270 km (2,653 miles), yet averaging only 170 km (110 miles) east to west. Related to this geographic and topographic diversity is an impressive climatic and vegetative diversity, and in turn an impressive animal diversity, particularly in reptiles and especially in lizards. One may say that Chile is a long, long, vertical ribbon of lizards! The Metropolitan Region, even though it doesn't start at the sea like every other region of Chile, almost reaches the sea, and sports a very significant topographic gradient, from 40 to 6570 masl (even though reptiles do not reach 4,000 m here). The Metropolitan Region, the region to which most Chileans and most tourists have the most exposure, is impressively rich in reptiles: 27 species! All of that in the smallest administrative region of Chile. Of these 27 species, 25 are native and 21 of them are endemic to Chile, found nowhere else on earth. Twenty-three of the 25 native species are lizards, while only two are species of snakes. In fact, Chile is well known to harbor many, many species of lizards, but very few snakes. Even for the well-known Metropolitan Region, which has been worked over in a detailed sense herpetologically, there are still new species and new facts about the known species discovered every year. In the last few years there have been several new lizard species found and described from the Metropolitan Region and scientists are continuously reexamining specimens and populations for evidence that other new species might be present. Amazingly, there is opportunity to discover new species, or details about the known ones, just out your back door. The amateur naturalist, or even the professional naturalist, will be charmed with the lizards of Chile, and will find that this is a very, very good place to start and become impressed with this fantastic lizard diversity of the Metropolitan Region. This field guide is an excellent introduction to these 23 lizards and 2 snakes.

This field guide to the reptiles of Chile's Metropolitan Region offers much more than most field guides. It has a very useful key for identification of species (you should use this key because many species show remarkable variation in color and form, and many species resemble one another), beautiful illustrations, both drawings and color photographs. In the species accounts you will find common and scientific names, body and tail lengths, notes on similar species, and lots of information on geographical distribution (within the country as well as within the region), morphology and color pattern, habitat, behavior, diet, reproduction, and conservation status. Written in Spanish and English, it can be used by naturalists and nature-lovers, be they Spanish or English readers. This guide organizes the species into established groups with similar characteristics and contains some taxonomic information, useful to the professional herpetologist, but not so detailed that it might prove tedious to the amateur herpetologist. Finally, there is a glossary and a bibliography to help those who might want additional information.

So take this book with you to explore the vast reptile diversity of Chile as you trek about the impressive Metropolitan Region of Chile. You will be glad you did!

(From prologue)

Dr. Stanley F. Fox Emeritus Regents Professor of Zoology Oklahoma State University Stillwater, Oklahoma, USA

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