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# SRARNZ NOTES

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## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN NEW ZEALAND NUMBER 44 SUMMER 2016

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NOTE: This newsletter is intended for the benefit of SRARNZ members. Anyone wishing to cite findings contained herein is urged to consult the person supplying the information and obtain their approval first.

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### 1. FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

A word (or few) from the President:

In a year without a SRARNZ conference, we have still had a lot of action.

### SRARNZ oral history project:

Richard Romijn worked with Shona McCahon to successfully secure funding from The Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and Lotteries, to conduct an oral history project for SRARNZ. A small amount of SRARNZ funding was also pledged to support the logistics of the project. The aim of the project is to record and archive eight oral histories of a representative range of herpetologists with knowledge of New Zealand's herpetofauna. Shona has made her way through most of the interviews and we hope to be able to show a few highlights during the next SRARNZ conference. I would like to take the opportunity here to thank all those who have been involved including the candidate selection team and interviewees.

### SRARNZ at the World Congress of Herpetology:

A few SRARNZ members attended the World Congress of Herpetology in Hangzhou, China on August 15-21, 2016, which was moved within 48h of the conference talks starting to another city, Tonglu. Quite the adventure and an excellent conference. In Tonglu, Phil Bishop and his team pitched for and won the hosting rights for the next World Congress of Herpetology, to be held in Dunedin in 2020.

### Conference planning:

SRARNZ 2017 – Ben Barr has made plans for the next SRARNZ conference at Manaia Camp, Whangarei Heads, Northland, January 20-22, 2017. The registration packs have been sent out – hope to

a single lizard! Though on the last trip a gecko very rudely left a sloughed skin delicately draped across a trap! The team also assisted DOC Te Kuiti with annual Archey's frog monitoring work in Whareorino and has been developing plans with local residents in central Coromandel to help establish survey protocols for Archey's frogs and lizards (including striped geckos!) on a private estate. On Rotoroa Island we released the second cohort of moko and shore skinks into habitats modified with dense planting and predator-proof retreats as part of our experimental establishment of lizards in the presence of weka. Further afield we provided DOC with practical support for Chesterfield skink monitoring and have financed surveys for Rangitata skinks, rough geckos and orange-spotted geckos.

Not quite native, but equally herpetological, we are nearing the completion of a new mixed-taxa Australian exhibit at the Zoo, which will feature goliath stick insects, green and golden bell frogs, lace monitor lizards, water dragons, snake-necked turtles and rainbow fishes within a big mixed bird species aviary – come and see it in the new year!

## 7. HERPETOLOGICAL NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

### NEW SPECIES

#### A new small golden frog of the genus *Pristimantis*

Dr. Mauricio Rivera-Correa and Dr. Andrew Crawford were part of a team that recently discovered a new species of frog in an Andean cloud forest in Colombia. Dr. Crawford had this to say about the discovery: “The name of the species, *Pristimantis dorado*, commemorates both its color (dorado meaning “golden” in Spanish), and El Dorado, a mythical city of gold eagerly sought for centuries by Spanish conquistadores in South America. The new species was found calling from bushes along a roadside at about 8,700 feet elevation near Chingaza National Park, only about 10 miles east of Bogotá, the capital and largest city of Colombia. Its discovery so close to a metropolitan area of nearly 10 million inhabitants illustrates how much of our planet's biodiversity yet remains to be discovered. With this new species, Colombia now hosts 800 species of amphibians, second only to Brazil in total diversity.

Every year there are increasing numbers of new species of amphibians discovered and described, so right now we cannot even estimate what the final diversity of amphibians will be.”



*Pristimantis dorado*. Photo: Dr. Santiago Castroviejo-Fisher

#### Discovery of a Giant Chameleon-Like Lizard (*Anolis*) on Hispaniola

A team led by University of Toronto researchers has discovered a new species of chameleon-like lizard, a Greater Antillean anole, which they named *Anolis landestoyi* for the naturalist who first spotted and photographed it. *A. landestoyi* was found in the Dominican Republic, but bears a strong resemblance to Cuba's *Chamaeleolis* anoles, which look less like typical anoles and more like chameleons: large, cryptic, slow-moving, and prone to clinging to lichen-covered branches high in forest canopies. “Our immediate thought was that this looks like something that's supposed to be in Cuba, not in Hispaniola – the island that Haiti and the Dominican Republic share,” says Luke Mahler of the University's Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. “Like the discovery of a missing puzzle piece, *Anolis landestoyi* clarifies our view of replicated adaptive radiation in anoles. We don't know if it's convergence or the fact that it's pretty closely related to *Chamaeleolis*, which may



*Anolis landestoyi* sp. nov. Photo: Miguel Landestoy.

