

LIVING WORLD

Journal of the Trinidad and Tobago
Field Naturalists' Club

admin@tffnc.org

ISSN 1029-3299



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Range Expansion of the Exotic

Eleutherodactylus johnstonei (Anura:

Eleutherodactylidae) to Tobago, Trinidad
and Tobago

Graham White

White, G. 2013. Range Expansion of the Exotic *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei* (Anura: Eleutherodactylidae) to Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2013, 75.

White, G. 2013. Range Expansion of the Exotic *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei* (Anura: Eleutherodactylidae) to Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2013, 75.

Range Expansion of the Exotic *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei* (Anura: Eleutherodactylidae) to Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago

Eleutherodactylus johnstonei is a small frog native to the Lesser Antilles (Murphy 1997). It was introduced to Trinidad some time prior to 1979 when it was observed by Hans Boos in lands surrounding the port in Port of Spain (Kenny 1979). It has since spread through much of the residential areas of north-west Trinidad from Chaguaramas to La Horquetta (Manickchan *et al.* 2011).

E. johnstonei is a very vocal species. It produces a high-pitched whistle throughout the night which is considered by some residents to be a nuisance (Hailey and Cazabon-Mannette 2011). Hedges (1993) suggested that there may be some acoustic interference with other frogs.



Eleutherodactylus johnstonei, Tobago, November 2012.

On 6 November, 2012 the author heard one frog calling on the grounds of the Magdalena Hotel in Lowlands, Tobago. The frog was calling from a potted palm within a screen house at grid reference 0742983E, 1133056N. The call was recorded and the frog captured and photographed. Two additional individuals were heard calling in the distance from the residential area of the property.

The frog was euthanized in a benzocaine bath before being preserved in 95% ethanol and lodged in the University of the West Indies Zoology Museum at St. Augustine, Trinidad, accession number UWIZM.2012.34. The species

was initially identified by the vocalisations and the specimen confirmed by John Murphy.

This is the first documented record of *E. johnstonei* from Tobago. There is one anecdotal record by Stephen Smith (personal communication) of the frog occurring at the Scarborough Port since November 2008, but no specimens were collected.

It is likely that many of the plants used by the hotel and the surrounding residential area originated in Trinidad and it is possible that the frog was introduced via potted plants. However, the presence in the potted plant may be coincidental and does not necessarily suggest that the frog had just arrived.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mike Rutherford for preparing the specimen, John Murphy for identifying the specimen and Stephen Smith for sharing his observation of the species at the Scarborough Port.

REFERENCES

- Hailey, A.** and **Cazabon-Mannette, M.** 2011. Conservation of herpetofauna in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. p.183-217. In **A. Hailey, B.S. Wilson** and **J.A. Horrocks**, eds. Conservation of Caribbean Island Herpetofaunas. Volume 1. Conservation Biology and the Wider Caribbean. Leiden: Brill.
- Hedges, S.B.** 1993. Global amphibian declines: A perspective from the Caribbean. *Biodiversity Conservation*, 2: 290-303.
- Kenny, J.S.** 1979. Some recent animal colonisations. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 1978-1979: 27.
- Manickchan, S.A., Starr, C.K., Ramjohn, C., Mahabir, S.V., Mahabir, K.** and **Mohammed, R.S.** 2011. The distribution of the frog *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei* (Amphibia: Eleutherodactylidae) in Trinidad, West Indies. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2011: 46-49.
- Murphy, J.C.** 1997. Amphibians and Reptiles of Trinidad and Tobago. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing. 245 p.

Graham White

g.whitett@gmail.com