

***Ameiva polops* (Saint Croix Ameiva). Conservation.**

Date of observation: 13 May 2013. Location: Protestant Cay- U.S. Virgin Islands. Coordinates: 17.749293, -64.703005. Voucher: image. Predation pressure from introduced mammals (e.g., *Rattus rattus*) threatens *Ameiva polops* populations on three of four off-shore islets where it occurs (St. Croix Ground Lizard 5-Year Review, 2013, USFWS). During the course of routine lizard monitoring on Protestant Cay during May 2013, I observed and examined one adult *Ameiva polops* (52.5 mm SVL) with a bifurcated tail. I observed four additional adult lizards, or 12.8% of 39 lizards observed on Protestant Cay, with bifurcated tails. During the same month, I observed 46 individuals on Buck Island Reef National Monument (BUIS) and 41 individuals on Green Cay National Wildlife Refuge (GCNWR) with intact tails or tail-loss resulting in a single regenerated tail. During one visit to Ruth Island, I observed six individuals throughout the entire island which is perceived as fewer than during similar days in previous years although tail status was not noted (J. Valiulis, pers. comm). Work on insular reptiles suggests that tail furcations may result from *Rattus rattus* redation (Hayes et al., 2012, *Biodivers Conserv* 21: 1893-1899). Protestant Cay, Ruth Island, and GCNWR have populations of *Rattus rattus* of unknown population density. *Rattus rattus* are eradicated from BUIS and there is a sustained monitoring program. Rodent management is on-going for GCNWR and Ruth Island; rats are only sporadically found during periodic trapping on GCNWR since a trapping project

in 2007 removed 100 individuals, but more than 70 rats were removed on Ruth Island in 2013. No sustained rat management occurs on Protestant Cay. *Rattus rattus* likely threatens the Protestant Cay population of this critically endangered species, and possibly affects the Ruth Island population.

Nicole F. Angeli, Texas A&M University, 221 Old Heep Building, College Station, Texas 77843, USA, nangeli@tamu.edu.

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