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## CHAMAELEO GRACILIS (Graceful Chameleon). REPRODUCTION IN FLORIDA.

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***CHAMAELEO GRACILIS*** (Graceful Chameleon). **REPRODUCTION IN FLORIDA.** Florida and Hawaii are the two states in the United States with the most severe invasive species problems (U.S. Congress 1993. Harmful Non-indigenous Species in the United States. Office of Technology Assessment, OTA-F-565,

Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 155 pp.). Over the last 50 years, increasing numbers of exotic lizard populations have been documented as established in Florida, with the number of non-native species breeding in the state now exceeding the number of native species (Meshaka et al. 2004. *The Exotic Amphibians and Reptiles of Florida*, Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida. 155 pp.). Among the many exotic lizard species known to have breeding populations in Florida, only one true chameleon, *Chamaeleo calyptratus*, is recorded as established (<http://wld.fwc.state.fl.us/critters/exotics>). Hence, we provide here an observation that may indicate that *Chamaeleo gracilis* also is reproducing in Florida.

At ca. 0930 h on 10 December 2004, an adult female *C. gracilis* (ca. 120 mm SVL) was captured walking on the center line of Citrus Blvd. in Palm City (27°02.507'N, 80°22.701'W, [datum: NAD27]; elev. 3 m). This represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> capture of a *C. gracilis* in this area, and several other sightings have been documented (Harold Parker, pers. comm.). The lizard seemed dehydrated and physically distressed, and was clearly gravid. After treatment by a veterinarian, it laid 22 eggs, about half of which seemed viable. After oviposition, the chameleon remained enlarged with additional eggs, but died before it could lay the remaining eggs. The overall number of eggs (~45) this specimen contained was towards the upper range recorded for the species (Spawls et al. 2002. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa*. Academic Press, London. 543 pp.).

Multiple sightings of *C. gracilis* in the same area that includes a gravid female with viable eggs suggests that natural reproduction of this species might be occurring in Palm City, Florida.

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