Beaded Lizard (*Heloderma horridum*; Squamata: Helodermatidae), Inside a House in Tlatlaya, Estado de México, México

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The Beaded Lizard (*Heloderma horridum*) is a venomous lizard distributed along the Pacific coast of México, from Sinaloa to Chiapas, and in central Mexico (Morelos, Puebla, and Estado de México; Reiserer et al. 2013). The species occurs from sea level to 2,108 m asl (Arenas-Moreno et al. 2022). It inhabits tropical dry forests; however, it can also be found in temperate habitats at higher elevations (Guadarrama et al. 2019).

Heloderma horridum occupies a variety of microhabitats, showing a preference for rocky slopes and sandy stream banks, which are used particularly during the spring nesting season of the Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura pectinata*), whose eggs constitute an important prey item for *H. horridum* (Beck 2005). The species also occurs in cultivated pastures bordering tropical dry forest, where individuals occasionally modify mammal burrows for use as shelters. Individuals may also leave these burrows to use branches or hollow tree trunks as temporary shelters, particularly during periods of rainfall (Beck and Lowe 1991). Herein, we report the occurrence of a juvenile *H. horridum* inside a house at a locality in central Mexico.

On 10 June 2026 at approximately 1930 h, a juvenile *H. horridum* (Fig. 1A) was observed inside a house (Fig. 1B). The adobe house has a tile roof, front window openings, a concrete floor, and two

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Fig. 1. (A) Juvenile *Heloderma horridum*. **(B)** Rural house in El Arenal, Tlatlaya, Estado de México, México, where the individual was observed. **(C)** Interior of the house showing the space beside the refrigerator where the juvenile found temporary shelter.

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rooms. The property is enclosed by a barbed-wire fence, and the entrance to the house lacked a door, allowing the individual to enter and take shelter besides a refrigerator (Fig. 1C). The house is located in El Arenal, Tlatlaya, Estado de México (18.562424° N, 100.097796° W; datum WGS84; 836 m asl; Fig. 2), approximately 300 m from a ravine, in the vicinity of a conserved tropical dry forest. The individual was safely guided into a plastic container using a branch and subsequently released away from nearby houses.

The occurrence of *H. horridum* inside a rural house located near a conserved tropical dry forest suggests that the individual most likely originated from the adjacent natural habitat. Previous studies indicate that *H. horridum* is closely associated with habitats that retain native vegetation and natural cover (Beck and Lowe 1991), whereas current evidence does not support the persistence of populations in areas modified by human settlements (Domínguez-Vega 2010). *Heloderma horridum* is protected from collection, transport, and killing throughout its range under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and is listed as Threatened under NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010. At the global level, Domínguez-Vega and Beck (2021) assessed the species as Least Concern (LC). Despite these legal protections, wild populations continue to face important threats in México, particularly habitat loss due to land-use change and intentional killing driven by negative cultural perceptions (Beck 2005). Therefore, our observation highlights the importance of complementing legal protection with the conservation of tropical dry forest and environmental education programs that reduce fear and misconceptions about helodermatid lizards, thereby helping to prevent the intentional killing of individuals encountered near rural houses.

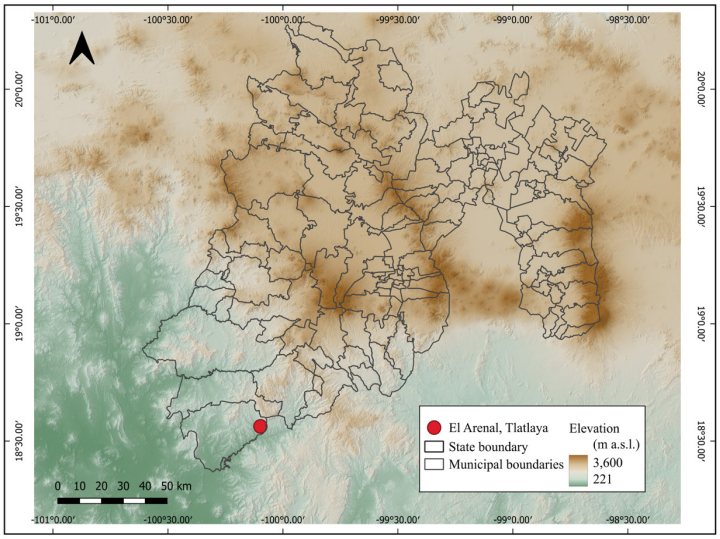


Fig. 2. Geographic location where the record of the juvenile *Heloderma horridum* at El Arenal, Tlatlaya, Estado de México, México, was made.

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