

Project Update: February 2014

Ninety-five percent of the Ernesto Tornquist Park, in the Ventana Hills System, has been burnt. This is the unique environment for the copper lizard. I am giving you digital news about the problem:

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1657081-sierra-de-la-ventana-otra-vez-azotada-por-un-incendio-forestal>

<http://nuevo.admin.telam.com.ar/notas/201402/50189-bomberos-combaten-un-incendio-en-la-comarca-de-sierra-de-la-ventana.html>

I made four trips to research for the copper lizard, but I have not been able to find it. I found several snails (*Plagiodontes patagonicus*) burnt. Studies say that the copper lizard eats exclusively these snails. I think now the status of the species is worse.

However, some sectors of the hills showed signs of recovery. And besides, some animal species survived the fire, even small birds were nesting, as band-tailed seedeater (*Catamenia analis*), and also, some lizards of other species were found, such as *Cnemidophorus* you can see in the photo. For these reasons, I believe that the work of finding the copper lizard is more important and despite what has caused the fire, there are still chances of finding populations of this species.

The next research trip will be next month. I do not have photos yet of the species, but I can get some. A group of colleagues found the copper lizard in November 2013 and they could photograph it. Are these photos helpful for you? Now I am sending pictures of the landscape after the fire, and some other photos of the environment before it.



Left: Trailhead in Ernesto Tornquist Park. Right: Band-tailed Seedeater chick alive after fire.



Before the fire.



After fire.



Left: Burnt environment. Right: recovering environment.



Left: Searching. Right: Cnemidophorus lizard.