

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Gallotia aff. simonyi in Appendix I.

B. PROFONENT

The Kingdom of Spain.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Reptilia
12. Order: Squamata/Sauria
13. Family: Lacertidae
14. Species: Gallotia aff. simonyi (Steindachner, 1889)
15. Common Names: English: Hierro giant lizard  
French: lézard géant de Hierro  
Spanish: Lagarto gigante del Hierro
16. Code Numbers:

The lizard of Salmor, Gallotia simonyi, occurred on Salmor Rock, near the coast of Hierro Island, until the species became extinct some fifty years ago. After the presence of a small population of lizards, occurring on the main land of Hierro Island was made public in 1975, it was presumed to be an extant population of Gallotia simonyi. The scientists, however, had not received the opportunity to study captured specimens and their presumption was based on the comparison of a photographic picture of one specimen with a description of the species provided by Boulenger in 1891 (Böhme and Bings, 1975).

After it was made possible to study some live specimens of the Hierro Island population and compare them with museum specimens of the extinct population from Salmor Rock, it was clear that there were major differences in body structure, head shape, temporal scutellation and scales of the preanal region. It was concluded that the population from the small site on Hierro Island forms a separate taxon, not yet described.

The removal of some specimens in order to describe the species in detail, to study internal characteristics and to point out a type specimen has not yet been undertaken since the population at present is considered to be too vulnerable to allow these removals. For the time being the species is defined as Gallotia aff. simonyi (Machado, 1985).

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Gallotia aff. simonyi occurs on Hierro Island (278 sq.km.), the westernmost island of the Canary Islands, Spain. It is found on the vertical slopes of Risco de Tibataje,

in the north-western part of the island. The size of the area is 1.5-2 sq.km. at an altitude of 350-500 m. above sea level. The species occupies an area of only 1-2 ha. Historic reports indicate a former presence in other parts of the island (Machado, 1985; Böhme *et al.*, 1981). Salmor rock is just off the coast of the Tibataje cliff chain.

22. Population: The total present population is estimated to be c. 100 animals (96-118), which is about half of the population of 1975, when it was estimated to be about 200 animals, half or more being young. The present population density is one animal to 15-20 sq.m. and the present ratio of young to adults is 1:8, which is very low. It has been suggested that the population faces a collapsing process and the lizard has to be considered to be in grave danger of extinction (Martinez Rica, 1982; Machado, 1985).
23. Habitat: The Tibataje cliff face consists of very rough and rocky slopes, with many crevices and other types of refuges. The climate of the area is subdesertic and the sparse plant cover is xerophytic. The lizard's primary food resources are plant species (leaves, buds and fruits), although insect remains were also found in its excrements.

Limiting factors to the species' recovery may include: predation, mainly from feral cats, ravens and kestrels; related cannibalism on eggs and young; the availability of egg-laying sites; and the scarcity of foodplants and their temporary reduction by overgrazing by trapped goats (Martinez Rica, 1982; Machado, 1985; Corbett, *in litt.*, 1986).

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: No present human utilization is known. Popular stories indicate that people of Hierro ate lizards in the past, which may have assisted in the reduction of the species. Factors caused by human influence (introduction of dogs and rats, increasing tourism to Hierro Island, plans which existed until recently to build industrial facilities), could form possible additional threats to the lizard population.
32. Legal International Trade: At present, the species is not subjected to any legal international trade. Böhme and Bings (1975) reported their intention to take the first couple of live caught, recently discovered animals to F.R. Germany to start a captive breeding programme, as they had done before with other Canary Island lizards. The two animals, however, were confiscated by Hierro Police and released again.
33. Illegal Trade: None is known to the proponent.
34. Potential Trade Threats: The giant lizards are very much wanted by reptile collectors and vivarium keepers. Machado (*in litt.*, 1985) recorded some stories of 'foreigners' offering large amounts of money for actual living specimens of the Hierro giant lizard. The lizard of Salmor (*Gallotia simonyi*) was eradicated due to overcollecting, in a period of only 42 years (1889-1932), for commercial and scientific purposes. This threat still exists for all species populations living in reduced zones, like islets

or rocks offshore, and it is magnified by their taxonomic status. Many collectors tend to concentrate on endemics or any type of singularity, particularly at present, where pet keeping is a popular and increasing hobby in many countries.

There exists quite a large trade in other Gallotia species from the Canary Islands, which has been sparsely recorded (e.g. Bergmans, 1974).

Commercial captures of Hierro giant lizards will be detrimental to the population as a whole. The Canary Islands have two international and five national airports, two big harbours, more than 1.5 million tourists each year and a special duty-free status, which makes it difficult to establish effective local controls.

#### 4. Protection Status

41. National: The species is protected under Spanish law (Royal Decree 3181/1980), which forbids all hunting, capture, tenancy, traffic, commerce and export of the species, including collecting of eggs and young. Preparation and commerce of stuffed specimens is prohibited too. ICONA (Spain's National Institute for Nature Conservation) has prepared a species recovery plan, principal aspects of which include: strategic fencing to prevent the access of goats, preparation of suitable sites for egg laying, selective reduction of introduced predators, such as cats, planting of principal vegetable food sources and ex-situ captive breeding programme, involving the transfer of pregnant females to another, homologous, habitat (Machado, 1985).
42. International: The species is included in Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Berne Convention, 1979). It appears in Red Data Lists such as the IUCN Red Data Book and the Council of Europe list of Endangered Reptiles in Europe. The lizard is included in the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1984. The Societas Europaea Herpetologica (SEH) contributed to enhance protective measures and is currently preparing a report on the species' status, as a consultant to the Council of Europe.
43. Additional Protection Needs: Although the collecting of specimens is regulated by law, control of the remote sites where the species occurs remains difficult, and people are willing to offer large sums for specimens, which may encourage some people to collect illegally. The inclusion of the Hierro giant lizard in Appendix I of the Convention provides an additional protection measure, since potential trade will be banned at the border of receptor countries and it is very important that with this extremely endangered species all conservation measures be used.

#### 5. Information on Similar Species

On the Canary Islands, two groups of lizards occur, both included in the endemic genus Gallotia Boulenger, 1916 (vv. Arnold, 1973). The first group, consisting of small lizards is formed by Gallotia atlantica s. l., endemic to the eastern islands and Gallotia

galloti s. l., endemic to the western islands. The other group consisting of lizards of large size is formed by Gallotia aff. simonyi on Hierro Island and Gallotia stehlini from Gran Canaria.

Gallotia aff. simonyi is considered to be related to Gallotia stehlini Schenckel, 1901, occurring on Gran Canaria rather than to Gallotia simonyi (Machado, 1985).

The largest lizard of the group is the extinct Gallotia goliath Mertens, 1942, which measured up to 1.50 m. Gallotia stehlini reaches 80 cm. and Gallotia aff. simonyi reaches c. 50 cm.

Gallotia aff. simonyi occurs sympatrically with the more common Gallotia galloti caesaris. The latter species is more entomophagous and competition for food probably hardly exists (Machado, 1985).

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

7. Additional Remarks

Prof. Dr. J. P. Martinez Rica, Mr. Antonio Machado, Mr. Keith Corbett and Mr. Wolfgang Bischoff are thanked for their suggestions and their co-operation in preparing the proposal.

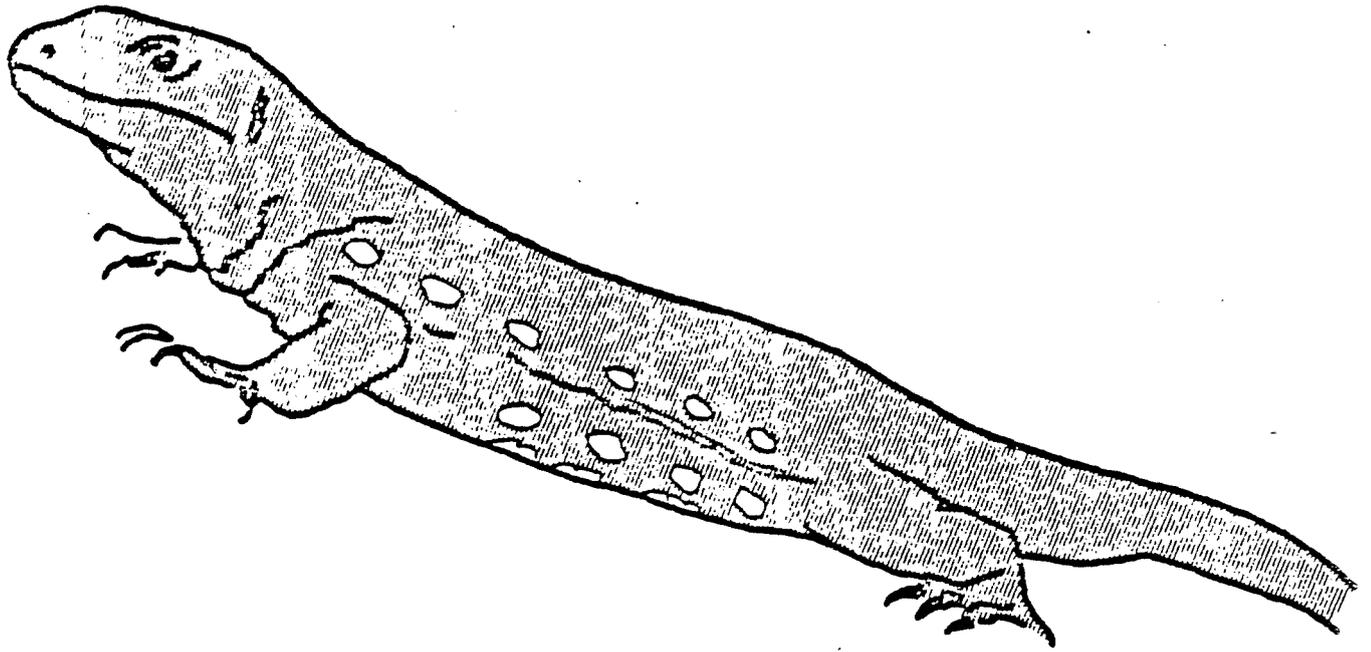
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(Machado, 1985)

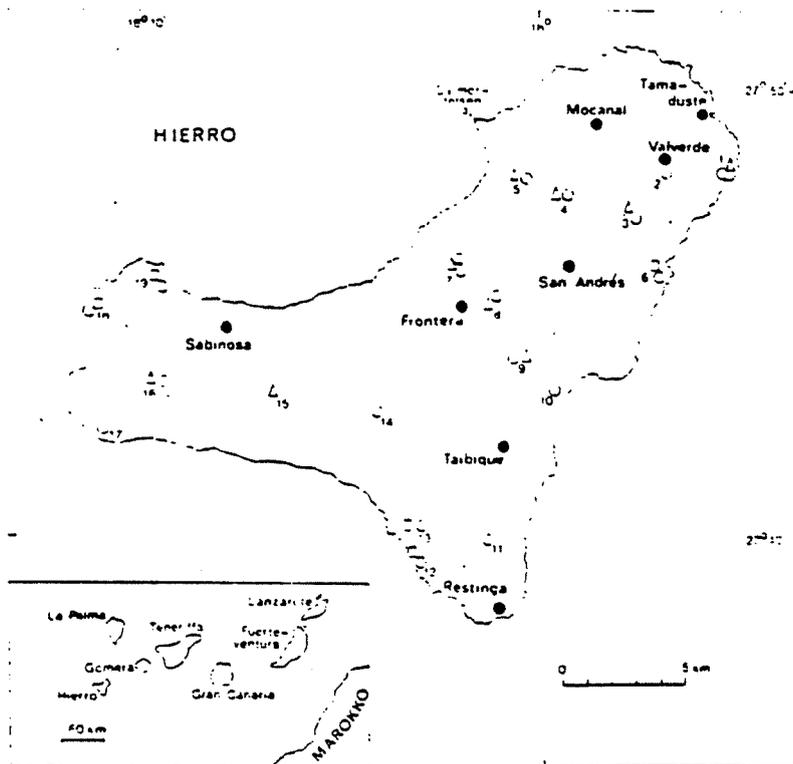
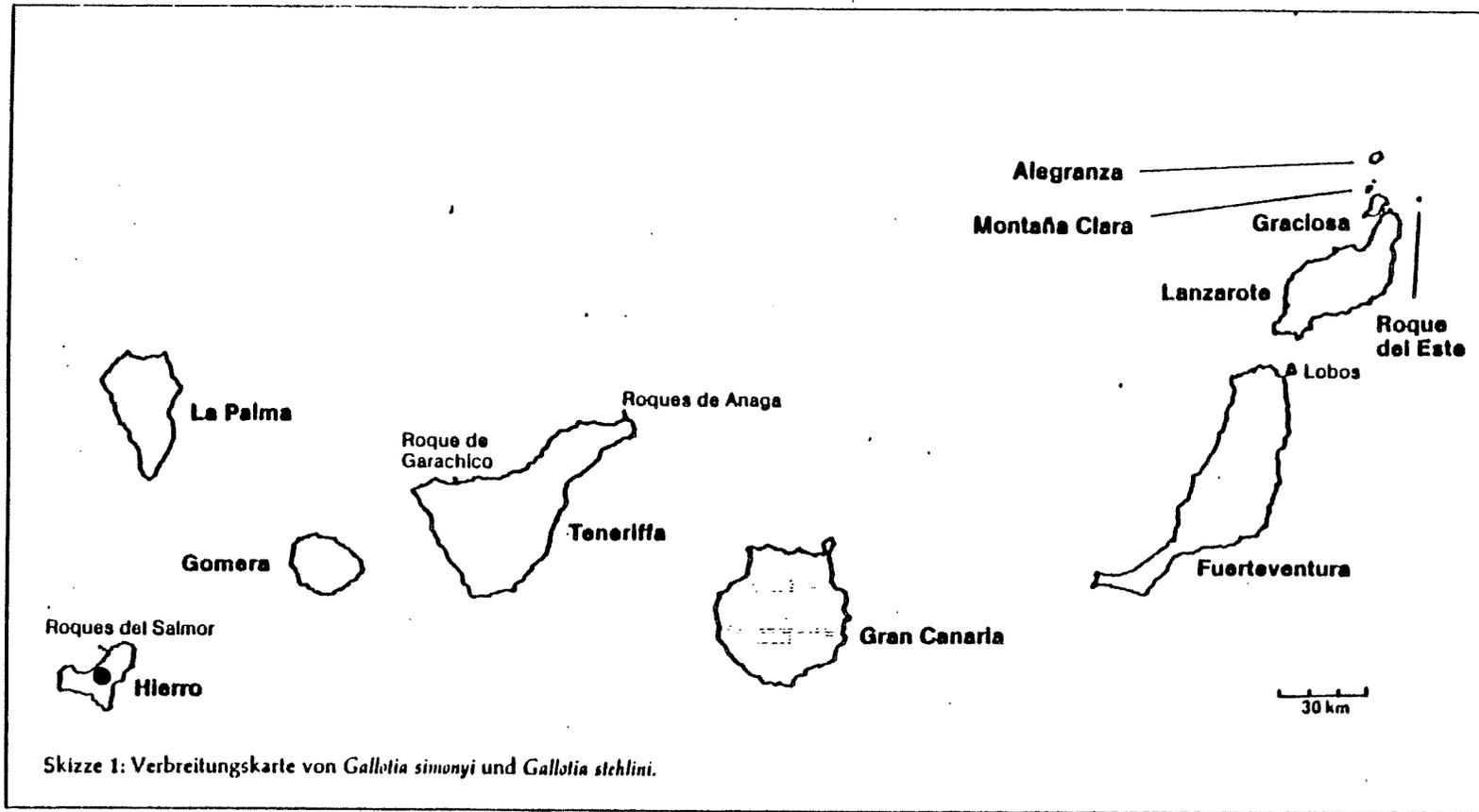


Abb. 1. Übersichtskarte der Insel Hierro. — Zeidin. Mus. Koenig, Bonn (U. BOTT).  
Map of the island of Hierro.

□ *Tarentola delalandii* ssp., △ *Chalcides viridanus* ssp., ○ *Gallotia galloti caesari*.  
Bezeichnung der Fundorte nach Mapa geográfica 1 : 50 000 (Höhenangaben über N.).  
1. La Caleta (20 m), 2. Valverde (600 m), 3. Tiñor (800 m), 4. Las Montañetas (550 m),  
5. Jarales (750 m), 6. La Mareta (20 m), 7. Caserío Guinea/Fuga de Gorreta (200 m),  
8. Jinama (1200 m), 9. Las Casillas (950 m), 10. Playa de la Arena (20 m),  
11. Montaña de Julán (400 m), 12. El Río Cala de Tacorón (20 m), 13. Hoya de Tacorón (120 m),  
14. Julán/Las Calzadillas (900 m), 15. Bintó (1250 m), 16. Santuario de los Reyes (740 m),  
17. Faro de Orchilla (40 m), 18. Hoya del Verodal (40 m), 19. Arenas Blancas (10 m).



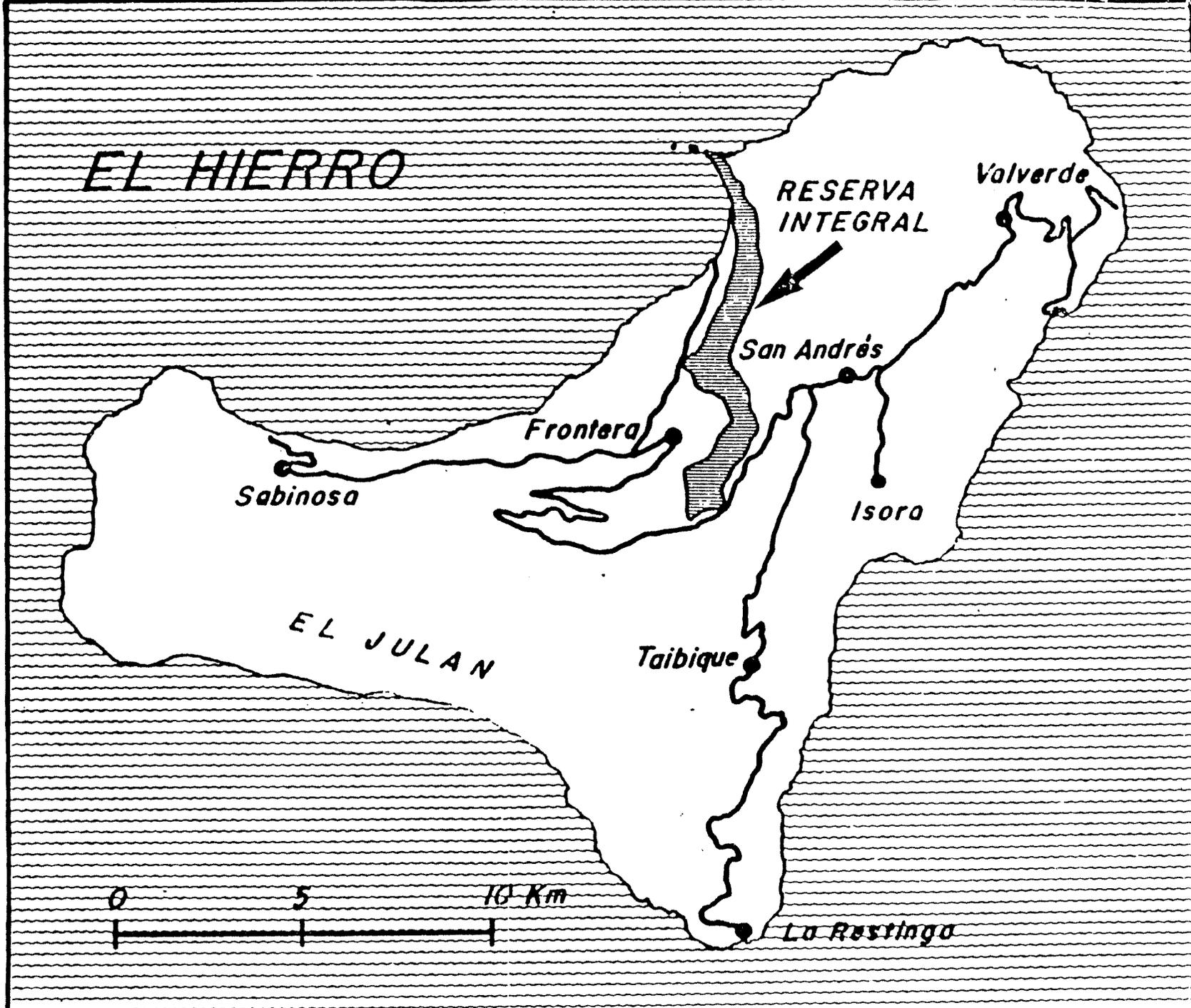
Skizze 1: Verbreitungskarte von *Gallotia simonyi* und *Gallotia stehlini*.

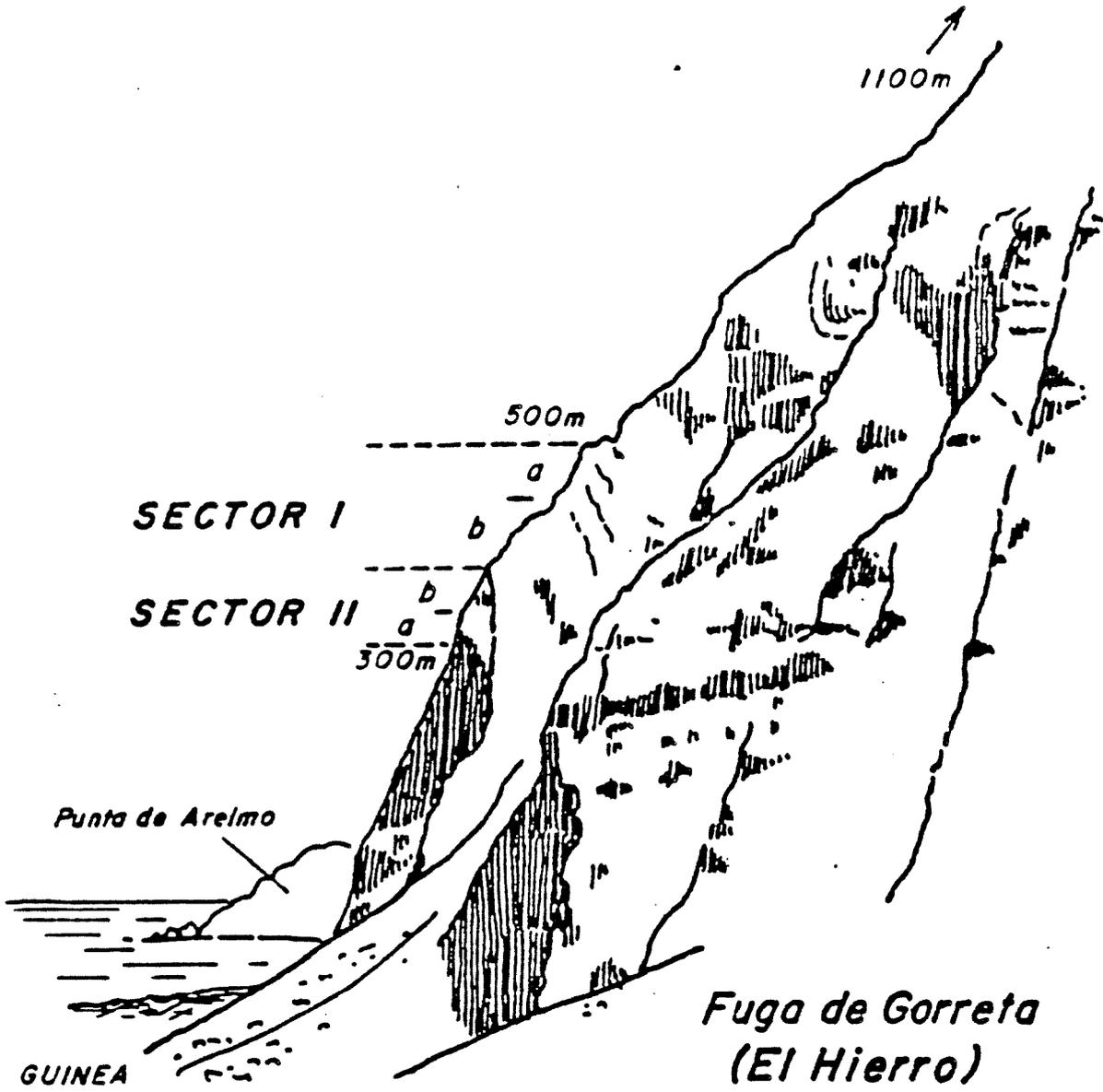
● *G. simonyi*

○ *G. stehlini*

(Bischoff, 1985)

(Machado, 1985)





(Machado, 1985)