

FOUR NEW SPECIES OF STRIPED SKINKS FROM QUEENSLAND

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Ctenotus nullum sp. nov., *C. hypatia* sp. nov. and *C. terrareginae* sp. nov. are skinks of rocky substrates from northeast Queensland. *C. aphrodite* sp. nov. is found in the arid country of the southwest of the State. □ *Ctenotus*, skinks, new species, Queensland.

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Ctenotus is a very speciose genus of skinks. Wilson and Knowles (1988) listed 81 species and illustrated several additional new species. In this paper, we describe four new species from Queensland. *Ctenotus* was described in 1964 by Dr Glen Storr of Perth, Western Australia, and most of the species of the genus were subsequently described by him (see Wilson and Knowles, loc. cit., for a list of papers). Sadly, Glen Storr recently passed away. Australians owe him a debt for his thirty years of ceaseless work towards elucidating the species of reptiles of this continent. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues. Our paper is dedicated to his memory.

In the following, pattern nomenclature is of Wilson and Knowles (1988). Abbreviations are: SV, distance from snout to vent in mm; HW, head width at widest part as % SV; HL, length of hindlimb as % SV; TL, tail length as % SV; QM, Queensland Museum; AM, Australian Museum.

Ctenotus nullum sp. nov.

Ctenotus sp. (4). Wilson and Knowles, 1988, p.278.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

HOLOTYPE: QM J32424, sandstone escarpment, 2 km W of McIvor River Crossing, Cape York Peninsula, (15°07'S 145°04'E), Queensland, collected by G.J. Ingram on 15 July, 1976.

PARATYPES: nr Isabella Falls (QM J41023-5, J42768-9); Finch Bay, 1.7 km SE of Cooktown (AM R71031); ESE side of Mt Simon (AM R71033); Black Mountain, S of Cooktown (QM 24647); Shiptons Flat (QM J42736); Spit Rock Gallery, S of Laura (QM J37999-38001); Quinkan, S of Laura (QM J24705).

DIAGNOSIS

A moderately large (maximum SV 79)

Ctenotus with a pattern of stripes and an upper lateral row of pale squarish blotches which are usually confluent with the midlateral stripe; a black vertebral stripe begins on the nuchals and always extends to at least the fore back; a brow that does not conceal the supraciliaries; supralabials usually 8; subdigital lamellae widely calloused, 25-28 on fourth toe; four supraoculars; 4-6 ear lobules; and 26-28 midbody scales.

For an illustration of the species see Wilson and Knowles (1988, p.278, photo no. 424).

DISTRIBUTION

Sandstone areas around Laura and those to the near north of Cooktown; also at the base of the boulder mountains of Trevethan Range; and Shiptons Flat south of Cooktown.

DESCRIPTION

SV: 45-79 (N = 9, mean 62.2). HW: 13-17 (N = 9, mean 14.8). HL: 46-55 (N = 9, mean 51.2). TL: 245-257 (N = 4, mean 251.8).

Snout sloping, slightly rounded in profile. Nasals separated. Nasal groove absent. Rostral and frontonasal in narrow contact. Prefrontals large, separated or contacting and forming a short suture along the midline. Frontal long and narrow, contacting the prefrontals (and the frontonasal in 66% of specimens), the first three supraoculars, and the frontoparietals. 2-4 enlarged nuchals on either side (N = 18, mean 2.7). Four supraoculars, second much the larger. Supraciliaries 9-11 (N = 18, mean 9.5), first largest. Supralabials 8, uncommonly 9 (N = 18, mean 8.1); sixth under the eye and enters the orbit. Ear aperture large, 4-6 (N = 8, mean 4.8) pointed lobules on anterior border. Midbody scale rows 26-28 (N = 9, mean 27.8). Number of scales from chin to vent 60-66 (N = 9, mean

62.4). Toes long, compressed; subdigital lamellae widely calloused, 25-28 ($N = 9$, mean 26.4) under fourth toe.

Upperparts olive to reddish brown with a narrow black vertebral stripe edged with white paravertebral stripes continuing for varying distances down back or tail. There are 2 to 4 white-lined black dashes on the hind edge of the parietals. A white dorsolateral stripe begins at the last supraocular and continues down back and along tail. This is edged broadly (sometimes narrowly) by a black laterodorsal stripe at least as far as the base of the tail. Upper lateral zone black with squarish white, or fawn with white centres, spots that are usually confluent with the midlateral stripe (in life, the upper lateral spots are usually red). The white midlateral stripe begins behind the nostril and continues back through ear, along the body and tail. This stripe is lined darkly below, with white blotches against a greyish background on the lower lateral surface. Sometimes there is a suggestion of a white ventrolateral stripe. Limbs with three black stripes. Ventrals cream to white.

ETYMOLOGY

'Nullum' is a patronym from the Ko-ko-ya-o language of eastern Cape York Peninsula, Queensland.

REMARKS

On specimens from the coast near Cooktown, the black vertebral stripe extends from the nuchals to the hind back or base of the tail. On specimens from the sandstones near Laura, this stripe only extends to the fore-back.

The range and habitat of *C. nullum* is similar to that of *C. quinkan*, except the latter has only been collected on sandstone (Ingram, 1979).

Ctenotus hypatia sp. nov.

Ctenotus sp. (3). Wilson and Knowles, 1988, p.278.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

HOLOTYPE: QM J42092, granite gorge, 15km W of Mareeba, (17°00'S, 145°17'E), NEQ, by D. Knowles on 17 October, 1983.

DIAGNOSIS

A medium sized (SV 54) *Ctenotus* with a pattern of stripes and an upper lateral zone of tan or white blotches on chocolate-brown; supralabials 7; subdigital lamellae keeled, 20 on fourth toe; four supraoculars; 3-4 ear lobules; and 28 mid-

body scales.

For an illustration of the species see Wilson and Knowles (1988, p.278, photo no. 423).

DISTRIBUTION

Known only from the holotype, which was taken in a granite gorge.

DESCRIPTION

SV: 54. HW: 12. HL: 44. TL: 215.

Snout sloping, slightly pointed in profile. Nasals separated. Nasal groove absent. Rostral and frontonasal in narrow contact. Prefrontals large, separated. Frontal long and narrow, contacting the prefrontals, the frontonasal, the first three supraoculars, and the frontoparietals. 4-5 enlarged nuchals. Four supraoculars, second much the larger. Supraciliaries 9, first largest. Supralabials 7, fifth under the eye and enters the orbit. Ear aperture large, 3-4 pointed lobules on anterior border. Midbody scale rows 28. Number of scales from chin to vent 75. Toes long, compressed; subdigital lamellae keeled, 20 under fourth toe.

Dorsal ground colour orange-brown. Black vertebral stripe begins at nuchals and continues onto tail for about 15mm. White paravertebral stripes begin at nuchals and fade out at base of tail. Black laterodorsal and white dorsolateral stripes begin above and behind the eye; laterodorsal fades out at fore back while dorsolateral breaks up at mid back but continues as white dashes onto the base of the tail. Upper lateral zone chocolate-brown with tan or white blotches that give the effect of barring but breaks up into speckling on the tail. White midlateral stripe begins in front of ear and ends at hindlimb. Lower lateral zone grey with white blotching. Side of head blotched with chocolate-brown stripes. Ventrals white.

ETYMOLOGY

Named for Hypatia of Alexandria who occupied the chair of Platonic philosophy. She was murdered in 415AD by a Christian mob.

Ctenotus terrareginae sp. nov.

Ctenotus sp. (6). Wilson and Knowles, 1988, p.278.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

HOLOTYPE: QM J41996, Warrawilla Ck, Hinchinbrook Is, (18°22'S 146°15'E), NEQ, collected by D. Milton on 14 July, 1983.

DIAGNOSIS

A large (SV 91) *Ctenotus* with a pattern of stripes and an upper lateral zone of white blotching on black; supralabials 7; subdigital lamellae widely calloused, 28 on fourth toe; four supraoculars; 3 ear lobules; and 28 midbody scales.

For an illustration of the species see Wilson and Knowles (1988, p.278, photo no. 426).

DISTRIBUTION

Known from Hinchinbrook Island and about 60km south of the island by the turnoff to Paluma on the Bruce Highway, on the coast. (GVC, pers. obs.).

DESCRIPTION

SV: 91. HW: 11. HL: 44. TL: 227.

Snout sloping, slightly rounded in profile. Nasals separated, Nasal groove present. Rostral and frontonasal in narrow contact. Divided prefrontals large, separated. Frontal long and narrow, contacting the prefrontals, the frontonasal, the first three supraoculars, and the frontoparietals. 3-4 enlarged nuchals. Four supraoculars, second much the larger. Supraciliaries 10, first largest. Supralabials 7; fifth under the eye and enters the orbit. Ear aperture large, 3 pointed lobules on anterior border. Midbody scale rows 28. Number of scales from chin to vent 74. Toes long, compressed; subdigital lamellae widely calloused, 28 under fourth toe.

Dorsal ground colour dark brown. Short black vertebral stripe begins at nuchals and terminates on upper back. Head scales marbled with black. Black laterodorsal and white dorsolateral stripes begin above and in front of eye and continue along nearly the full length of the tail. Black upper lateral stripe begins in front of eye and continues to beyond base of tail where it becomes divided into two black stripes by a brown mid-stripe. White midlateral stripe begins behind nasals and continues back to and along length of tail. Lower lateral zone black with white blotching from head to midlateral area (white blotches sometimes coalesce with midlateral stripe to give an effect of black barring) where blotches merge to form a black lower lateral stripe that continues along the tail. Limbs reddish brown with black and white stripes. Ventrals white.

REMARKS

The holotype was found under rock exfoliation

amongst shrubs along a creek.

ETYMOLOGY

Named for Queensland.

Ctenotus aphrodite sp. nov.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

HOLOTYPE: QM J41814, Oorida area, Diamantina Lakes, (23°46'S 141°08'E), SWQ, collected by R. Atherton and G. Porter on 12 March, 1983.

DIAGNOSIS

A moderately large (SV 72) *Ctenotus* with a pattern of stripes (five black and four white dorsal stripes between the dorsolateral stripes) and an upper lateral zone of white blotches on black; supralabials 8; subdigital lamellae narrowly calloused, 34 on fourth toe; four supraoculars; 3-4 ear lobules; and 31 midbody scales.

DISTRIBUTION

Known only from the type locality.

DESCRIPTION

SV: 72. HW: 12. HL: 53. TL: 229.

Snout sloping, pointed in profile. Nasals separated, Nasal groove absent. Rostral and frontonasal in narrow contact. Prefrontals large, widely separated. Frontal broad, contacting the prefrontals, the frontonasal, the first three supraoculars, and the frontoparietals. Two enlarged nuchals on either side. Four supraoculars, second much the larger. Supraciliaries 8, first largest. Supralabials 8; sixth under the eye and enters the orbit. Ear aperture large, 3-4 pointed lobules on anterior border. Midbody scale rows 31. Number of scales from chin to vent 76. Toes long, compressed; subdigital lamellae narrowly calloused, 34 under fourth toe.

Dorsal ground colour coppery brown. Top of head marbled with black. There are five black and four white dorsal stripes between the dorsolateral stripes. Black vertebral and white paravertebral stripes fade out above hindlegs. Other dorsal stripes break up just beyond mid back. In alcohol, the pale dorsal stripes can appear to be coloured bluish-white or copper depending upon the angle of the light. Upper lateral zone black with distinct white blotches but, from hindlegs to along tail, the blotches are absent. White, wavy midlateral stripe sometimes broken with black. Lower lateral zone grey to

black with white blotching; continues as a grey lower lateral stripe outlining below the white midlateral stripe along the tail. Limbs light brown with black stripes. Ventrally pinkish white.

ETYMOLOGY

Named for Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love.

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