

A new *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia: Scincidae)
from Western Australia

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Abstract

A new skink, *Ctenotus angusticeps*, is described from Airlie Island, off the north-west coast.

Ctenotus angusticeps sp. nov.

Figure 1

Holotype

R97423 in Western Australian Museum, a gravid female collected by V.L. and P.J. Long on Airlie Island, Western Australia, in 21°20'S, 115°10'E, on 16 November 1987.

Paratypes

R96987-9, pit-trapped in *Acacia coriacea* shrubland on Airlie I. on 30 July 1987.

Diagnosis

A small, slender, narrow-headed, faintly patterned member of the *C. pantherinus* group (Storr 1975) with separated prefrontals, callose subdigital lamellae and spiny soles.

Description

Snout-vent length 64-69 mm (N 4). Length of appendages (% SVL): tail 162 (N 1); foreleg 25-27; hindleg 37-41.

Nasals narrowly separated (N 3) or in point contact; postnarial groove absent, weak or strong. Prefrontals narrowly separated. Supraoculars 4, first three in contact with frontal. Supraciliaries 6 or 7, first three much larger than fourth to sixth. Palpebrals (ciliaries) 10-12. Second loreal as wide as high or wider. Presuboculars 1 or 2. Upper labials 7 or 8. Ear lobules 3 or 4, obtuse or subacute, first or second (from top) largest. Nuchals 1-4 on each side. Midbody scale rows 28 or 30. Toes slightly compressed; lamellae under fourth 19-22, each with a moderately wide callus. Palmar and plantar scales high and sharp.

Dorsal and lateral surfaces dark olive grey, mottled with black and whitish. Markings on side of body tending to be arranged in three series (laterodorsal, upper lateral and midlateral) of 'ocelli', i.e. short, whitish longitudinally elongate bars, laterally edged with black (in one specimen whitish bars almost confluent

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and forming stripes). Dorsal pattern still more vague, but some indication of a black vertebral stripe. Markings on tail consisting of several rows of longitudinally elongate, blackish spots. Claws reddish brown.



Figure 1 Holotype of *Ctenotus angusticeps* photographed in life.

Distribution

Only known from one small low island off the Pilbara coast.

Remarks

Perhaps this taxon is descended from one or other of the two regional subspecies of *C. pantherinus*, viz. *C. p. ocellifer* (Boulenger) of the Pilbara mainland and *C. p. acripes* Storr of Barrow Island (Storr 1975). If so, it must have evolved very rapidly from a small founder population, for it is now very different from all subspecies of *C. pantherinus*. Alternatively it may be an old species, having much the same relationship to *C. pantherinus* as *C. hanloni* has to *C. grandis*; this would be virtually confirmed if it were found elsewhere.

Derivation of name

From Latin *angustus* (narrow) and *-ceps* (head).

Reference

Storr, G.M. (1975). The genus *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia, Scincidae) in the Kimberley and North-west Divisions of Western Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 3: 209-243.