

Three records of *Cyrtodactylus* sp. from 'Bilip', Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea

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SIGHTING RECORD : 1

Identity of subject: Bent-toed Gecko, *Cyrtodactylus* cf. *serratus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkonidae)

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photographs by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified (tentative) by: Paul Oliver.

Location: 'Bilip', Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea. (Lat 6° 52.575'N Long 143° 55.335'E) i.e. 17 km south of Samberigi airstrip, Southern Highlands Province (Fig 3.).

Elevation: 730 metres.

Habitat: Tall, primary forest on karst limestone, with a complex understory including many fallen, rotting trees covered with lichens and mosses.

Date and time: 30 November 2002, 20:00 hrs.

Description of record: The subject was found consuming a winged insect on a mound of vegetation at the edge of an unsealed road through primary forest (Figs. 1 and 2.) : the vegetation comprised felled tree trunks, bulldozed saplings, canopy vegetation and forest floor vegetation pushed to the side of the road during recent road construction. Its snout-vent length was unrecorded, however it was relatively small in size (possibly a juvenile) and, based on the size of the insect being consumed, had a minimum estimated snout-vent length of 4 cm.



Fig. 1. (Inset : close-up of the lateral skin fold near the right hindlimb).

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Fig. 2.

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Remarks : The shape of the head and body, slender digits and large eyes identify this gecko as *Cyrtodactylus* sp. The colours and markings on the head, nape, body and tail are similar to *Cyrtodactylus serratus* Kraus, in particular the dark chevron on the nape and paired dark blotches either side of the vertebral line which morph into dark bands on the tail. *Cyrtodactylus serratus* is diagnosed by having "highly raised, dentate tubercles arrayed along the length of each skin fold" (Kraus, 2007). Fig. 1 (inset) is a close-up of the lateral skin fold near the right hindlimb: this grainy image hints at the possible presence of dentate tubercles, although the arrangement of tubercles appears more sparse than might be expected for *Cyrtodactylus serratus*.



Fig. 3 : Map showing location of Bilip, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea.

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The holotype of *Cyrtodactylus serratus* was collected in 1987 from Tabubil, West Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, around 350 km northwest of Bilip (Fig 3.). Note that the coordinates of Tabubil (now a large mining town) are in error in Kraus (2007) : these are incorrectly quoted as 9° 15'S 152° 12'E (which is a marine location off the east coast of Papua New Guinea). The catalogue of the Australian Museum collection gives the coordinates of the holotype as 5° 15'S 141° 12'E (accessed online 29 June 2016).

SIGHTING RECORD : 2

Identity of subject: Bent-toed Gecko, *Cyrtodactylus* sp. "Gobe Ridge" (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkonidae)

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified (tentative) by: Fred Kraus.

Location: 'Bilip', Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea. (Lat 6° 52.575'N Long 143° 55.335'E) i.e. 17 km south of Samberigi airstrip, Southern Highlands Province.

Elevation: 720 metres.

Habitat: Primary forest on karst limestone, as per Sighting Record 1.

Date and time: 31 November 2002, 20:15 hrs.

Description of record: A gecko of estimated snout-vent length of 4.5 cm was found exploring an area of fallen vegetation, next to an unsealed road through primary forest (Fig 3.).



Fig. 4.

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Remarks : The shape of the head and body, the long slender digits, and the large eyes identify this gecko as *Cyrtodactylus* sp. The relatively large head suggests this may be a juvenile. The orange-brown nape and dorsum of this specimen bear eight dark, narrow, clearly-defined, wavy bands : the upper surface of the hind limbs also appear banded. The forelimbs are notably more slender than the hindlimbs.

The gecko in this image shows some similarity to the in-life image of *Cyrtodactylus* sp. 'Gobe Ridge' (Rösler et al, 2007: 207, Fig. 13.).

SIGHTING RECORD : 3

Identity of subject: Bent-toed Gecko, *Cyrtodactylus* sp. "Gobe Ridge" (Reptilia: Squamata: Gekkonidae)

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified (tentative) by: Fred Kraus.

Location: 'Bilip', Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea. (Lat 6° 52.575'N Long 143° 55.335'E) i.e. 17 km south of Samberigi airstrip, Southern Highlands Province.

Elevation: 710 metres.

Habitat: Primary forest on karst limestone, as per Sighting Record 1.

Date and time: 30 November 2002, 20:30 hrs.

Description of record: A gecko of estimated snout-vent length of at least 8 cm was found partly concealed beneath fallen vegetation, next to an unsealed road through primary forest (Fig 4.).



Fig. 5.

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Remarks : The shape of the head and body, the long slender digits, and the extremely large eyes identify this gecko as *Cyrtodactylus* sp. and, based on the relative size of the head, probably an adult. The brown dorsum of this specimen bears nine or ten dark, well-defined, wavy bands. The forelimbs and hindlimbs are of roughly equal thickness, and the upper surfaces of both are mottled.

Like Sighting Record 2, this gecko shows some apparent similarity to *Cyrtodactylus* sp. 'Gobe Ridge' (Rösler et al, 2007: 207, Fig. 13.).

References:

Kraus, F. (2007). A new species of *Cyrtodactylus* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from western Papua New Guinea. *Zootaxa* 1425: 63-68.

Rösler, H., Richards, S. J. & Günther, R. (2007). Remarks on morphology and taxonomy of geckos of the genus *Cyrtodactylus* Gray, 1827, occurring east of Wallacea, with descriptions of two new species (Reptilia: Sauria: Gekkonidae). *Salamandra* 43 (4): 193-230.