

## ***Sphenomorphus* sp. ('*S. maindroni*') from Gobe, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea**

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**Observer:** Nick Baker.

**Photographs by:** Nick Baker.

**Subject identified by:** Sven Mecke.

**Location:** Gobe, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. (Lat 6° 50.49'N Long 143° 49.88'E)

**Elevation:** 1005 metres.

**Habitat:** Road cutting, adjacent to primary forest on karst limestone.

**Date and time:** 08 April 2006, 13:58 hrs.

**Identity of subject:** *Sphenomorphus* sp. (part of *Sphenomorphus maindroni* species complex)  
(Reptilia: Sauria: Scincidae).

**Description of observation:** A juvenile, with an estimated snout-vent length of 3.5 cm, and a tail length of 5.5 cm, was observed active on a mossy boulder and amongst rock fragments at the edge of a road cutting in an area of karst limestone, in full sunlight (Figs. 1 and 2.).



Fig. 1.

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Fig. 2.

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**Remarks:** The subject is identified as *Sphenomorphus* sp. based on its elongated head and body, and slender limbs, and as a juvenile specimen of *Sphenomorphus maindroni* based on its brown dorsum and tail bearing numerous thin, wavy, broken, yellowish bars or rows of spots (de Rooij, 1916, as *Lygosoma maindroni*). *Sphenomorphus maindroni* is a species complex which, as of 2004, comprised 22 species (Greer & Shea, 2004).

The Gobe area of Southern Highlands Province is an area dominated by limestone karst scenery comprising typically steep-sided hills and ridges which supports extensive primary forest. It is an area of very high rainfall with high humidity: where roads and other clearings occur temperatures can reach more than 30 degrees centigrade at noon.

**References:**

De Rooij, N. (1915). *The Reptiles of the Indo-Australian Archipelago*, Vol. 1 Lacertilia, Chelonia, Emydosauria. E. J. Brill Ltd, Leiden. 382 pp.

Greer, A.E. & Shea, G. (2004). A new character within the taxonomically difficult *Sphenomorphus* group of Lygosomine skinks, with a description of a new species from New Guinea. *Journal of Herpetology* 38 (1): 79-87