

FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF THE LONG-TAILED RINGNECK *Gongylosoma longicauda* (SQUAMATA: COLUBRIDAE) IN THAILAND

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One of the difficulties encountered in zoogeographical studies about the reptiles of Thailand is that many published locality or even species records are not supported by any evidence nor a reference to museum material (Pauwels and David, 2005). It is for instance the case for the occurrence of *Gongylosoma longicauda* (Peters, 1871) in Thailand. That species was listed by Nabhitabhata and Chan-ard (2005: 161) from “Narathiwat (Waeng),” thus Waeng District, Narathiwat Province in extreme southern Thailand on the border with Malaysia, without further details. Two recent books on the reptiles of Thailand (Cox et al., 2012; Chan-ard et al., 2015) also listed it from Narathiwat Province without additional evidence. It had not been mentioned from Thailand by Nabhitabhata et al. (“2000”), Nutphand (2001, see also David et al., 2004) nor by Das (2010). It was also not listed from Bala Forest in Narathiwat Province by Chan-ard (1996). In the book of Chan-ard et al. (2015) the drawings of *G. longicauda* and *Liopeltis tricolor* (Schlegel, 1837) have been mixed up (see Pauwels and Grismer, 2015), adding to the confusion.

In the course of our ongoing zoogeographical and taxonomical studies on the reptiles of the Thai-Malay Peninsula (latest reports by Pauwels et al., 2015 and Sumontha et al., 2015), one of us (OSGP) examined a collection of Colubridae from southern Thailand housed at the Thailand Natural History Museum (THNHM) in Pathum Thani. We describe hereafter the specimen THNHM 12634 whose label indicates: “Sci. Name *Liopeltis longicauda*; Locality: Ban Bala, Lo Chut, Waeng, Narathiwat; Date: Dec. 2001; collector Tanya Chan-ard,” the specimen itself bearing two labels: “THNHM 12634” and “NW 3864”. Paired meristic characters and measurements are given left/right; head mea-

surements taken to the nearest 0.1 mm with a digital caliper; body measurements made to the nearest 1 mm):

Male (confirmed by dissection of tail base). Snout-vent length 264 mm. Tail complete, tail length 251 mm. Head length 14.0/14.2 mm; head width 6.9 mm; head depth 4.9 mm; horizontal eye diameter 3.1/3.1 mm; eye-snout tip distance 3.7/3.6 mm. Pupil round. Two prefrontals (prefrontal suture length 1.4 mm), two internasals (internasal suture length 0.8 mm); frontal length 3.9 mm, frontal width 2.6 mm; parietal suture length 4.1 mm; combined parietals width 6.3 mm; 8/8 supralabials, 3rd – 5th/3rd – 5th contacting the orbit, 7th largest; 1st and 2nd/1st and 2nd supralabials in contact with nasal scale; 1/1 loreal; loreal squarish in broad contact with the nasal, loreal height 0.9/0.9, loreal length 0.8/0.6 mm; 1/1 preocular; 1/1 supraocular; no subocular; 2/2 postoculars, upper largest; 1+2/1+2 temporals; 8/8 infralabials whose 4/4 first contact the anterior sublingual; first pair of infralabials in contact behind the mental; anterior sublingual pair shorter and narrower than the posterior one; posterior sublinguals anteriorly contacting each other for more than a third of their length. Two rows of gular scales before the anterior preventral scale. Dorsal and supracaudal scales smooth, no apical pits detected; 13 dorsal scale rows at one head length behind head, 13 dorsal scale rows at midbody (i.e., above the ventral scale corresponding to half of the total number of ventral scales), 13 dorsal scale rows at one head length before vent and at the level of the last ventral, thus no dorsal scale row reduction. Ventrals smooth; two preventral scales + 114 ventral scales. Cloacal scale divided; 120 divided and unkeeled subcaudal scales. Coloration in preservative (Figs. 1 and 2): dorsal surface of head unicolor dark brown; supralabials partly whitish, with four extensions of the dark brown dorsal coloration onto the upper lips on each side; before the eye the whitish color reaches and covers the preocular, behind the eye the whitish color extends to the upper postocular and

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Fig. 1. General dorsal view of *Gongylosoma longicauda* (THNHM 12634, preserved specimen) from Ban Bala, Narathiwat Province, extreme southern Thailand. Photograph by O. S. G. Pauwels.

forms a triangle; a thin whitish band beginning at the level of the posterior supralabial and in contact with the ventral whitish color meets its symmetric stripe on the other side to form a chevron on the nape; the chevron is prolonged by a whitish vertebral stripe without interruption; two whitish lateral stripes begin just after the nape; all light dorsal stripes fade after about a fifth of the dorsum length; dorsal and supracaudal background color dark brown; undersurface of head, venter and tail uniformly whitish.

Four *Gongylosoma* species are known from the Thai-Malay Peninsula: *G. baliodeira* (Boie, 1827), *G. longicauda*, *G. mukutense* Grismer, Das et Leong, 2003, and *G. scriptum* (Theobald, 1868). Based on the character table provided by Grismer et al. (2003), THNHM 12634 is distinguished from *G. baliodeira* by its higher number of supralabials (8 vs. 6 or 7), higher number of supralabials in contact with the eye (3 vs. 2), lower number of ventrals (114 vs. 118–141), much higher number of subcaudals (120 vs. 58–76), the presence

(vs. absence) of a nuchal chevron and the presence (vs. absence) of five light stripes on anterior body. Until now *G. mukutense* was known only from its holotype from Tioman Island off the southeastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia (Iskandar et al., 2012). However we report here a second specimen (LSUHC 5100, housed in the La Sierra University Herpetological Collection) collected on Pulau Tioman. THNHM 12634 differs from both specimens of *G. mukutense* by its two posterior temporals (vs. one in *G. mukutense*) and its sublingual pairs of unequal size (vs. equal). However, it shares with *G. mukutense* a thin nuchal band in contact with the vertebral stripe, while Grismer et al. (2003) indicated the presence of a thin (vs. thick) band and its contact (vs. separation) from the vertebral stripe as diagnostic characters separating both species. The discovery of a second specimen of *G. mukutense*, showing the same scalation peculiarities (single, enlarged, posterior temporal scale; sublingual pairs of equal size) as the holotype, confirms the morphological distinctiveness of this insular endemic. The ven-



Fig. 2. Lateral view of head and forebody of *Gongylosoma longicauda* (THNHM 12634, preserved specimen) from Ban Bala, Narathiwat Province, extreme southern Thailand. Photograph by O. S. G. Pauwels.

tral number of THNHM 12634 (114) is lower than the range given by Grismer et al. (2003) for *G. longicauda* (117 – 141), and its subcaudal number higher (120 vs. 91 – 105). THNHM 12634 differs from *G. scriptum* by its lower number of ventrals (114 vs. 126 – 148), the presence (vs. absence) of a nuchal chevron, the presence (vs. absence) of five light stripes on anterior body, and the absence (vs. presence) of paravertebral spots.

We thus confidently identify THNHM 12634 as *G. longicauda* and establish here the first documented record of the species' presence in Thailand, and the northernmost known locality for this species in the Thai-Malay Peninsula. The species, originally described from Sarawak on Borneo, is thus currently confirmed for Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, but is rare in Malaysia (Grismer et al., 2003) and Thailand. Ban Bala is located just near Narathiwat Wildlife Research Station in Bala Forest, itself part of the Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary (5°44' N 101°46' E – 5°57' N 101°51' E) which borders Malaysia. The Sanctuary is covered by tropical lowland evergreen forest but is relatively isolated ecologically, as it is surrounded by agriculture fields on its Thai side and by a mix of forest and fields on its Malaysian side (Kitamura et al., 2010). As far as we know, *G. longicauda* does not face any specific threat in Thailand, is not collected for food or medicinal purposes, and has never been found in the pet trade.

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