

Trachylepis dichroma GÜNTHER,
WHITING & BAUER, 2005:
additional Tanzanian material and
restriction of the type locality

The large African skink *Trachylepis dichroma* GÜNTHER, WHITING & BAUER 2005 was recently described from Africa based on material imported into Europe for the pet trade in the early 1990s. The exact origin of the type material was unknown, but believed to have originated from Tanzania (GÜNTHER, WHITING & BAUER 2005). Only one specimen included in the type series (ZFMK 71721) was not based on material bred in captivity. However, this was also obtained commercially and reported to have originated from near Dodoma, central Tanzania.

The new species was well-differentiated from *T. brevicollis* (WIEGMANN, 1837), both genetically, by colour pattern, and by scalation features (GÜNTHER et al. 2005). Subsequently, *T. dichroma* was shown to have an extensive distribution in Kenya, and also to display greater variability in scalation, particularly in midbody scale row counts (WASONGA & MALONZA 2006). We report here on additional Tanzanian material and further variation in scalation. We also discuss the possible origin of the type material and take the opportunity to restrict the type locality.

The Klein's Camp concession is a CC Africa ecotourism venture based in northern Tanzania, bordering Kenya and the Serengeti National Park. During a herpetology study course for trainee rangers in December 2005, a number of large skinks were observed basking on a disused termite nest in *Acacia* woodland. They were captured by employing funnel traps, manufactured from mosquito mesh (BRANCH & RÖDEL 2003) and baited with grasshoppers, placed over entry holes into the termite nest. Voucher material was deposited in the herpetological collection of the Port Elizabeth Museum, South Africa, and comprised: two adult females (PEM R16787-88) and two recently born juveniles with visible umbilical scars (PEM R16770, 16774), all from a single disused termite nest below Klein's Camp Lodge, Loliondo Game Controlled Area,

Mara District, Tanzania (01°49'16.2"S, 35°14'30.5"E, 1860 m asl), 8 December 2005, William R. BRANCH, Alastair KIPLIN, Maxine GAINES, and CC Africa trainee rangers. Additional material collected in early 2007 (but not retained) included: a very large male (>160 mm SVL), trapped with a juvenile from a disused termite nest, 8 February 2007, Klein's Camp Lodge area (01°50' 05.8"S, 35°14'46.3"E, 1884 m asl); and a very large female (186 mm SVL live) collected from a different termite nest in the same region, 24 January 2007. The habitat is Open *Acacia gerrardii* woodland. The skinks have only been observed on termite mounds composed of dark 'black cotton' soil, with most sites being on the edge of the woodland adjoining open *Themeda/ Sporobolus* grassland.

Scutellation details for the additional material (excluding the 2007 material from which scutellation details were not collected) agrees in most details with those of the type series, with the exception that: there were only 34 midbody scale rows in the two juvenile specimens (36 and 38 in the two adult females); only 1-2 supraoculars (not 3 as in holotype) bordered the frontal (most of the lateral margin of the frontal was bordered by the large 2nd supraocular, with only minor or no contact between the frontal edge and supraoculars 1 and 3); the ratio of FST/FIP varied from 0.98-1.23 (mean 1.095); keeled subdigital scales and spinose scales on the soles were more prominent in newborn skinks than in mature females.

The fresh Tanzanian material considerably increases the maximum adult SVL for both sexes (male 160 mm, female 186 mm). The adult male coloration was similar, but slightly different from that described for captive males in the type description. The back was a uniform brown-bronze with a paler ventrum. Along the neck and forebody the dorsal coloration was demarcated dorso-laterally from the belly by a red-orange infusion, with additional irregular black blotches over the forelimb insertion and on the neck. The chest and throat were also infused with red-orange, as were the rostral and anterior upper labials.

The current, ill-defined origin of the type material of *Trachylepis dichroma* ("presumed origin... Tanzania, East Africa") is obviously unsatisfactory. One of us (JB) has



Fig. 1. Juvenile *Trachylepis dichroma* (PEM R16770), Klein's Camp, northern Tanzania.

been actively involved in the legal collection and export to Europe of Tanzanian reptiles for over 18 years, and was aware of the unusual coloration of many specimens exported under the name of *T. brevicollis*. Specimens exhibiting the unusual coloration, that are now known to be referable to *T. dichroma*, have only been obtained from three localities north of Mt. Meru, within the Arusha District, northern Tanzania: Longido (02°20' S, 36°40'E), approximately 25 km south of the Kenyan border on the main road (A104) from Arusha to Nairobi; Oldonyo Sambo

(03°10'S, 36°35'E), approximately 30 km north of Arusha on the A104, on the north-western slopes of Mt. Meru; Ngare Nanyuki (03°09'S, 36°50'E), 23 km E of the A104 on the northeastern slopes of Mt. Meru.

As it is likely that the pet trade material exported into Europe originated from this source, we accordingly restrict the type locality of *Trachylepis dichroma* to the region bounded by Longido (02°20'S, 36°40'E), Oldonyo Sambo (03°10'S, 36°35'E), and Ngare Nanyuki (03°09'S, 36°50'E), Arusha District, northern Tanzania.



Fig. 2. Adult female *Trachylepis dichroma* (PEM R16787), Klein's Camp, northern Tanzania.

In a recent review of East African reptiles (SPAWLS et al. 2002), the range of *T. brevicollis* was shown to extend through northern and eastern Kenya, with three isolated localities in northern Tanzania (Bulyanhulu, south of Smith Sound; Serengeti; and Tarangire). The first two localities are relatively close to the new material from Klein's Camp, and may therefore be referable to *T. dichroma*. The Klein's Camp population extends the species' distribution approximately 170 km WSW of the nearest Kenyan population (Nairobi National Park; WASONGA & MALONZA 2006) and 190 km NW of the centre of the restricted type locality. Whether these populations are confluent remains unknown. WASONGA & MALONZA (2006) noted that Kenyan populations were scattered, and appeared to be restricted to arid and semi-arid lands in the south-central, eastern and northeastern regions. Similar large skinks have been seen (AK) inhabiting termite mounds in open grassland in the Mara, all in open grassland, but whether they are *T. brevicollis* or *T. dichroma* is unknown.

SPAWLS et al. (2002) records the altitudinal limit of *T. brevicollis* (including *T. dichroma*) as up to 1500 m asl, but sites for *T. dichroma* at Klein's Camp are all above 1750 m asl, and most over 1800 m asl. Further surveys are necessary to determine the ranges of *T. brevicollis* and *T. dichroma* within Tanzania, and also to determine whether the low midbody scale row counts (30-32) in specimens from Garrisa, Tana River Valley, eastern Kenya (WASONGA & MALONZA 2006) have taxonomic significance.

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Studies in African *Agama* I. On the taxonomic status of *Agama lionotus usambarae* BARBOUR & LOVERIDGE, 1928

BARBOUR & LOVERIDGE (1928) described *Agama colonorum usambarae* based on a series of 22 specimens (holotype: Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge/Mass. [MCZ R-24129]; paratypes: MCZ [R-24130-39], Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago [FMNH 12280-7]) from Soni, near Lusotho at the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania. Eight paratypes come from Mnazi, the northern side of the Usambara Mountains; the other paratypes from the same locality as the holotype. Three more paratypes, not catalogued at the time of the description, were located at the MCZ. Meanwhile one of them got the number MCZ R-166832 (ROSADO; pers. comm.). The other two paratypes are stored at other institutions: one was exchanged with the Transvaal Museum (TM 16656) (MASHININI; pers. comm.), the other is now located in the collection of the Zoological Museum Hamburg (ZMH R04419) and was examined for this study. All three have the same locality as the holotype.

Through the recognition of *Agama colonorum* as a replacement name for *Lacerta agama* LINNAEUS, 1758 by DAUDIN (1802), *A. colonorum usambarae* was regarded as a subspecies of *Agama agama* and believed to be endemic to the Usambara Mountains (BROADLEY & HOWELL 1991) in Tanzania. After the overdue separation of the *Agama lionotus* complex from *Agama agama* sensu strictu by BÖHME et al. (2005), its taxonomic status was changed to *Agama lionotus usambarae*. Since its description nobody

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