

THE SCINCID LIZARD *EGERNIA MCPHEEI* WELLS & WELLINGTON, 1984 IN QUEENSLAND. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 45(2): 266. 2000:- Saxicoline members of the *Egernia striolata* complex in eastern Australia have had a complex taxonomic history. Cogger (1960) demonstrated ecological and morphological separation of sympatric saxicoline and arboreal species of this complex in the Warrumbungle Ranges, NSW, identifying the arboreal species as *E. striolata* and describing the saxicoline species as *E. saxatilis saxatilis*. Other saxicoline populations from SE Australia were described as *E. saxatilis intermedia*, the subspecies name referring to the intermediate morphology of these populations, which were allopatric to *E. striolata*. Subsequently, some workers have assumed that all saxicoline members of the complex in SE Australia, including the New England Tableland, are *E. saxatilis* (see Horton, 1972; Cogger, 1988). Wells & Wellington (1984) named an additional species, *E. mcphreei*, from 3 specimens from the Coffs Harbour area, NSW, but did not differentiate it from either subspecies of *E. saxatilis*, or resolve the limits of the distribution of either species. The description of *E. saxatilis intermedia* refers to two atypical northern NSW specimens subsequently reidentified as *E. mcphreei* (see Shea & Sadlier, 1999 for the reidentification and type status).

A single Queensland Museum record of *E. saxatilis* was reported from SE Qld, close to the NSW border, by Covacevich & Couper (1991). The specimen on which this record was based was exchanged with the United States National Museum (USNM) in 1976, and was not re-examined prior to publication of the record.

We here report re-examination of this specimen (formerly QM J28654, now USNM 203953), another specimen from nearby, and an unambiguous photographic record from a third Queensland locality, and identify all three as *Egernia mcphreei*. Thus, this species is added to, and *E. saxatilis* removed from, the list of Queensland reptiles (Covacevich & Couper, 1991).

USNM 203953, preserved 1 Aug. 1973, is one of a litter of more than three born to a wild-caught female from near Girraween, SE Qld, collected 2 Dec. 1972. It is brown dorsally, with 28 midbody scales, 23 lamellae below the fourth toe, and dorsal scales smooth. The snout-vent length is 61.6mm, and tail length 79mm (TL/SVL 128.2%).

On 27 Jan. 1999, two large adult individuals were closely observed on a large rock outcrop at the summit of the McPherson Range at Moss Garden (28°17'S 152°26'E) on the NSW/Qld border by GS and RS. One (Australian Museum R153859) was on the NSW side of the border fence, while the other, not collected, was observed one metre distant on the Qld side of the fence. The rock outcrop created an exposed sunny area in what was otherwise wet sclerophyll/ rainforest. The collected specimen has 30 midbody scales, 23/22 lamellae below the fourth toe, dorsal scales bluntly keeled, snout-vent length 124mm, and tail length 157mm (TL/SVL 126.6%).

At least three individuals were observed, and one photographed, by RJ on 6 April 1997, on the southern peak of Mt Mitchell, SEQld (28°04'S 152°23'E), inhabiting closed rocky grassland with shrubs and grasses, above a mosaic of wet sclerophyll/rainforest. The photographed individual displayed dark brown dorsum, bright orange body venter, and bluntly keeled dorsal scales.

Based on unpublished studies by the senior author, *E. mcphreei* is distributed along the coast and E side of the Great Dividing Range of NE NSW, from the Barrington Tops area to the records reported herein. These records are the most inland localities known for the species, and probably represent a migration along the Clarence River valley from more coastal populations. The species is differentiated from the

e geographically proximate *E. striolata* in its larger size (SVL up to 143mm vs 119mm), more chocolate-brown dorsal coloration (vs grey), more brightly coloured venter (bright orange to orange-yellow vs dull orange-yellow to yellow); longer tail (tail length = 0.907(snout-vent length)^{1.077} vs tail length = 1.352(snout-vent length)^{0.951}; tail length as % of SVL 111.6-143.0%, mean = 127.1% vs 95.7%-123.3%, mean = 109.6%) and greater number of lamellae below the fourth toe (21-28, mean = 24.7 vs 16-26, mean = 20.2). It may be differentiated from *E. saxatilis* by having dorsal scales bluntly keeled in adults and smooth in juveniles (as in *E. striolata*; vs sharply keeled in adults, more weakly keeled in juveniles), fewer midbody scale rows (27-32 vs 35-41, mean = 37.0 for *E. s. saxatilis*, 30-42, mean = 34.5 for *E. s. intermedia*) and a reduced dark upper lateral zone (vs strong). The nearest populations of *E. saxatilis* are in the Warrumbungle Mtns (*E. s. saxatilis*) and on the Newnes Plateau W of Sydney (*E. s. intermedia*). *Egernia mcphreei* and *E. striolata*, which are allopatrically distributed, both inhabit crevices in trees and rocks when in isolation from other members of the complex, so that the ecological separation observed by Cogger (1960) between *E. striolata* and *E. saxatilis* in sympatry is not applicable in this instance.

Comparative Material

E. mcphreei: AM 4873, R8108, R11859, R12740, R16990, R16992, R16994-95, R41174, R41815, R41826, R54308, R54456, R54797-99, R54807, R59315, R60487, R62338, R66154-57, R68239, R68474-75, R71400, R76514, R90602, R93468, R96830, R96834, R96894, R97704, R108766, R111944-46, R112279, R120490, Northern Territory Museum R4808-10.
E. striolata: AM R1050, R1054-55, R1499, R1825, R2005, R2896-98, R4171, R9315, R9403-05, R11055, R11596a-b, R11597a-b, R13899, R14961-67, R15250, R15254-60, R15284-86, R15288, R15290, R15376, R15538-48, R15550-59, R16778-79, R17095-96, R17664-66, R17869-70, R18773, R18909-18, R18924, R20281, R20315-17, R20671, R20731-35, R21448, R27980-81, R28027-30, R30328, R31597-98, R31770-72, R41803-09, R41811-14, R41818-24, R41827-29, R41831, R41840-41, R43439-57, R43462-67, R44663, R44762, R47338-39, R52717, R52947-50, R52951, R57769-70, R57873, R58259, R60481, R60483-86, R60494, R60496, R66144-45, R66148-49, R67921-22, R68311, R69589-90, R69599, R92464, R92465-66, R92468, R92470-74, R94534-36, R94727-28, R94783, R96550, R96628, R110746, R110755-56, R112852, R112953, R113322, R121037-42; Australian National Wildlife Collection R3201, R3964-67, R4052-55, R4544-56; Museum of Victoria D9273-75, D9276-77, D9278-79, D15423-27, D54283; QM J51, J263, J412-13, J415-22, J10487, J13354, J13356-57, J13752-70, J14246, J28526-27, J30095-96, J30717, J30664, J31862, J34125, J34797, J35413; South Australian Museum R15418.

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