

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW GECKO OF THE GENUS *GYMNODACTYLUS* FROM
SERPENT ISLAND

BY ARTHUR LOVERIDGE

It is to Mr. J. Vinson, well known for his active interest in the fauna of Mauritius, that the museum is indebted for his having submitted the interesting lizard described below.

Serpent Island is fully as difficult of access as its near neighbor Round Island, long famous in herpetological circles for the monotypic genera of boas (*Bolieria* and *Casarea*) and other reptiles peculiar to it. These provide ample evidence of its long isolation. Owing to the turbulent seas by which they are surrounded, a landing on these islands is only possible during short intervals of calm weather which occur usually in November. Messrs Barnwell and Booker are to be congratulated in taking advantage of this opportunity to secure a new member of the ancient genus *Gymnodactylus*, which I propose calling:

Gymnodactylus serpensinsula sp. nov.

Holotype: Museum of Comparative Zoology, No. 51,550, a gravid ♀ from Serpent Island off the northeast coast of Mauritius. Collected by Messrs P. J. Barnwell and A. G. Booker, on November 24, 1948.

Diagnosis: Small, striated, subconical tubercles disposed in longitudinal series among the irregularly-sized, juxtaposed, dorsal granules which apparently average slightly smaller than the keeled ventrals; a slight fold from axilla to groin; claws strong.

Most nearly related to *G. rubidus* (Blyth) of the Andaman Islands, with which it has been compared, and from which it differs in possessing keeled ventrals and in other ways. The new species also shows affinities with *G. marmoratus* (Gray, 1831) of Java.

Description: Head moderately large; forehead concave, steeply sloping towards snout; snout bluntly rounded, twice as long as the orbital diameter, which is two-thirds its distance from the ear-opening and three times the vertical diameter of the ear-opening; ear-opening vertical, subtriangular; rostral twice as broad as high, with median cleft above; granules on snout convex, keeled, slightly larger than those in center of occiput; nostril between rostral, first labial, and 3 nasals of which the uppermost is separated from its fellow by 1 granule; upper labials 9-10; lower labials 8; mental about as long as broad; a pair of large postmentals followed by the very small granular scales which merge into those covering the throat and are separated from the anterior lower labials by a series of enlarged scales.

Back and limbs covered above with small, unequal, usually smooth, juxtaposed granular scales intermixed with small, striated, subconical

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tubercles arranged in 14, more or less regular, longitudinal series; lateral scales subequal to the keeled ventrals, which are slightly larger than the dorsals; limbs long, the adpressed hind limb reaching the axilla; 11 well-defined lamellae and scansors under the first toe, 18 under the fourth; base of tail (unfortunately the rest is regenerated) covered with irregular, smooth scales and scattered tubercles above; below, at base, with irregular imbricate scales; on either side slightly posterior to the anus is a row of 4 enlarged scales.

Color: Above, pale sandy buff to gray conspicuously blotched with black or brown; each labial with a blackish spot. Below, body and limbs white, immaculate; regenerated tail grayish brown. The general resemblance in body pattern to that of *G. rubidus* makes it appear probable that an unregenerated tail would be banded above with black and white.

Size: Total length of adult ♀ holotype, 105⁺ (60 + 45⁺) mm., as tail regenerating.

Breeding: Eggs ready for deposition in late November.



Loveridge, Arthur. 1951. "A new gecko of the genus *Gymnodactylus* from Serpent Island." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 64, 91–92.

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