

A New *Sphenomorphus* (Lacertilia: Scincidae) from the Rainforests of Northeastern Queensland

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For several years Australian herpetologists familiar with the lizards of northeastern Queensland have been aware that there was a large undescribed species of skink associated with the rainforests between Cooktown and the Tully River on the Atherton Tableland. The new species was recognized to be similar to *Sphenomorphus nigricaudis* a Papuan-Australian species that reaches the southern limit of its distribution at the base of Cape York Peninsula (Cogger 1975 and Greer 1979). The new species was never collected in large numbers, but over the years the number of specimens has slowly grown to where there are now a total of 36. I have recently examined all of this material and in this paper I present a formal description of the species, summarize its natural history and discuss its relationships.

In naming the species I wish to draw attention to the dusky brown tail that characterizes most large specimens and hence I propose the name

***Sphenomorphus fuscicaudis* n.sp.**

(Figs. 1,3)

HOLOTYPE: Queensland Museum J 25218 — Top of Mt. Finnigan (3,700 ft.), Mt. Finnigan National Park, northeastern Queensland. Collected on 9 November 1974 by Ms Jeanette Covacevich and Mr Keith McDonald.

PARATYPES: All localities are in northeastern Queensland between Cooktown and the Tully River on the Atherton Tableland.

Australian Museum: R 10829 — Atherton Tableland, no date; R 29539 — Lake Barrine, 15 October 1969; R 30359 — Danbulla State Forest, approx. 20 miles N. Cairns (sic ?), 30 August 1970; R 54635 — Atherton Tablelands, no date; R 56561 - 56562 — southern base of Thornton Peak, 16° 13' S., 145° 22' E., 23 July 1976; R 57061 - 57062 — Palmerston Highway near Millaa Millaa, 7 January 1976; R 57131 — southern base of Thornton Peak, 24 July 1976; R 60772 - 60773 — 9.6 km N. of the Kennedy Highway near Kuranda via the Black Mountain road, 18 July 1976; R 60774 — approx. 10.8 km W. of the Mossman - Mt. Molloy road via the Mt. Lewis forestry road, Mt. Lewis, 21 July 1976; R 61299 — Millaa Millaa, January 1977.

Museum of Comparative Zoology: 112059 - 112060 — Mt. Hartley (2000 ft.), 12 July 1968; 112061 - 112062 — Home Rule, Slaty Creek (600 ft.), 2 June 1968; 128634 — Speewah (1000 ft.), 14 February 1971; 111269 - 111270 — Big Tableland, 6 June 1968.

National Museum of Victoria: D 1277 — Queensland, no date.

Queensland Museum: J 15807 — Crystal Cascades, near Cairns, no date; J 25220 — just W. of Obree Point, E. of Home Rule, 17 November 1974; J 25221 — near "The Granites", Home Rule, 17 November 1974; J 25135 — Mt. Finnigan National Park (2600 ft.), 10 November 1974; J 25142, 25144 - 25145 — slopes of Mt. Hartley, 30 October 1974; J 25273 — Mt. Hartley, 6 November 1974; J 25288 — near Home Rule, on tract to "The Granites", 11