

A NEW LIZARD IN THE GENUS *CTENOTUS*  
(LACERTILIA: SCINCIDAE) FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
WITH NOTES ON ITS BIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

A new species in the genus *Ctenotus*, from the Northern Territory is described and figured. It has previously been confused with *C. inornatus* from which it is distinguished. Data are provided on its reproduction and habitat preferences. Aspects of reproduction of *C. inornatus* are considered in a comparison between the two species.

INTRODUCTION

Storr (1970) reviewed the members of the genus *Ctenotus* occurring in the Northern Territory, recognising twenty-three species, but subsequently (1971) removed one species (*C. taeniatus*) from this list, basing his action on a misidentification. It has since been added to twice with the description of *C. storri* (Rankin 1978) and the discovery of *C. regius* by Gillam *et al.* (1978).

The species groups of *Ctenotus* introduced by Storr are not employed here, as the status of these groups is obscure (see Storr 1969, p.98) and the species described below is considered distinctive enough to facilitate diagnosis without such measures.

The following abbreviations are used throughout this paper. AM: Australian Museum, Sydney; ANWC: Australian National Wildlife Collection, Canberra; NTM-A/S: the collection held at the Arid Zone Research Institute, Alice Springs.

The new species is distinguished by a prominent black vertebral stripe, hence we propose to call it *Ctenotus vertebralis* sp. nov.

***Ctenotus vertebralis* sp. nov.**

Figs. 1-4

HOLOTYPE: No. R410 in the collection of the Arid Zone Research Institute, Alice Springs, N.T., collected by M. W. Gillam on 5 July 1977, at Arnold River, Cox River Station N.T., 15°43'S, 134°32'E.

PARATYPES: (21) Koongarra, Mt Brockman Range, N.T., 12°53'S, 132°50'E (AM R38842-57); Nourlangie Rock, Mt. Brockman Range, N.T., 12°46'S, 132°39'E (AM R39899); Maranboy Police Station, N.T., 14°32'S, 132°47'E (ANWC R0463, R0474); Cox River headwaters, Cox River Station, N.T., 15°54'S, 134°41'E (AM R65113, NTM-A/S R411).

DIAGNOSIS: *Ctenotus vertebralis* is a moderately small (up to 55 mm SVL), slender species with sparse patterning. It is distinguished from all other described members of the genus by the following suite of characters: a very distinct black vertebral stripe, often pale edged, extending well onto the tail; no distinct pale blotches on upper lateral or

\*Deceased

Records of The Australian Museum, 1979, Vol. 32 No. 15, 501-511, Figures 1-6.