

A New Australian Scincid Lizard, *Ctenotus coggeri*, from the Alligator Rivers Region, Northern Territory.

ROSS A. SADLIER

Herpetology Department, Australian Museum, P.O. Box A285,
Sydney South, 2000

ABSTRACT. *Ctenotus coggeri*, a new species of scincid lizard from the Northern Territory, is described. It is endemic to sandstone woodland habitat on the Arnhem Land escarpment where it is sympatric with *Ctenotus inornatus*, the species with which it has previously been confused. Recognition of *C. coggeri* necessitated comparison with *C. inornatus* including the type specimen of *Hinulia inornata* Gray, the provenance of which is also reviewed.

Sadlier, Ross A., 1985. A new Australian scincid lizard, *Ctenotus coggeri*, from the Alligator Rivers region, Northern Territory. Records of the Australian Museum 36: 153-156.

Keywords: Taxonomy, Australia, Scincidae, *Ctenotus*

Arnhem Land is a region of heavily dissected sandstone, fringed north and east by coastal plains through which run extensive river systems to the Arafura Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria respectively. It is extremely rugged country with limited access. Consequently most knowledge of the Arnhem Land herpetofauna comes from surveys carried out on the more accessible western edge of the escarpment where it rises abruptly from the surrounding floodplain and lowland woodland associated with East Alligator River (Cogger, 1974; Mitchell, 1955; Sadlier, 1985).

Cogger (1983) depicts the diversity of habitats and herpetofauna to be found in the Alligator Rivers region and draws special attention to the high level of endemism associated with certain habitats, such as the sandstone outliers represented by Mt Brockman, Cannon Hill and Djawamba massif. It is from certain of these sandstone outliers that a new species of *Ctenotus* is here described.

Ctenotus coggeri n.sp.

Figs 1, 2

Type material. HOLOTYPE. Australian Museum (AM) R88547 (Fig. 1) an adult male from Jabiluka uranium mining project area N.T., grid reference 741113 on sheet No.5472 (Edition 1) National Map Series, 'Cahill', 12°33'S x 132°56'E.

PARATYPES. Six paratypes collected by R.A. Sadlier on the Jabiluka uranium mining project area: AM R88505 (3 August 1979), AM R88548 (5 August 1979) locality as

holotype; AM R88835 (5 September 1979), AM R88930 (22 September 1979), AM R88931-88932 (23 September 1979) grid reference 747139, 12°32'S x 132°56'E.

Six paratypes collected by H.G. Cogger and D.A. Lindner at Koongarra, Mt Brockman, 12°52'S x 132°54'E: AM R38801, AM R38804-38807 (22 February 1973), AM R38954 (4 March 1973).

Diagnosis. The following suite of size, scalation and colour characteristics will distinguish *Ctenotus coggeri* from all other species in the genus: moderately large size (maximum SVL 80 mm); subdigital lamellae with broad dark calli; frontal contacting first three of four supraoculars, second widest; usually 8 upper labials; auricular lobules obtuse tending to form nearly continuous posterior free edge, grey in colour with fine dark spotting; uniform brown dorsal surface; uniform black upper lateral surface between fore and hind limbs; white midlateral stripe broken at groin but continuous with longitudinal stripe on hindlimb.

The first four features are characteristic of the *C. lesueurii* species group, of Storr *et al.* (1981), of which most members also have a well developed pattern of bold dorsal stripes and pale lateral spots between the fore and hindlimbs. *Ctenotus coggeri*, *C. quinkan* (tentatively placed in the *C. lesueurii* species group), poorly patterned *C. inornatus* and *C. helenae* lack these dorsal and lateral features of coloration.

Description. Large robust species attaining maximum snout to vent length (SVL) of 80 mm. Distance from axilla to groin 58.2-62.2% of SVL (×