

A Taxonomic Revision of the *Cyclodomorphus branchialis* Species Group (Squamata: Scincidae)

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ABSTRACT. The *Cyclodomorphus branchialis* species group is defined on synapomorphies of scalation. Within this complex, five allopatric species, one with three subspecies, are recognised on morphological grounds: *C. branchialis* (Günther) of the lower west coast and hinterland, *C. maximus* (Storr) of the Kimberley, *C. melanops melanops* (Stirling & Zeitz) widespread in spinifex habitats of the arid north-west, and *C. m. elongatus* (Werner) widespread in spinifex habitats of the arid south and east of the continent, together with two new species, one from the lower west coast and the other from South Australia, and a new subspecies of *C. melanops* from chenopod habitats along the southern fringe of the Nullarbor Plain. The morphology, distribution, habitat preferences and reproduction of the seven taxa are described. All primary type specimens are illustrated. A key to the species and subspecies in the genus *Cyclodomorphus* is provided. *Cyclodomorphus branchialis*, considered on previous taxonomic opinion to be widespread in arid Australia, is restricted to a small area in Western Australia and is considered vulnerable.

SHEA, GLENN M. & BRIAN MILLER, 1995. A taxonomic revision of the *Cyclodomorphus branchialis* species group (Squamata: Scincidae). Records of the Australian Museum 47(3): 265–325.

Closely allied to the large bluetongue skinks of the genus *Tiliqua* Gray, 1825 is a group of smaller species that have variously been considered as congeneric with *Tiliqua*, or placed in a separate genus, for which the names *Omolepida* Gray, 1845 or *Cyclodomorphus* Fitzinger, 1843 have been used (Shea, 1990). Two of the species of *Cyclodomorphus*, *C. casuarinae* (Duméril & Bibron, 1839) and *C. gerrardii* (Gray, 1845) are readily identifiable and confined to the moist coast and ranges of eastern Australia (see Shea [1995] for a

revision of variation in the former species, and the recognition of two new species). The remaining taxa within *Cyclodomorphus* are inhabitants of the dry interior and west coast of Australia, and have posed taxonomic problems for over a century. This latter group, differentiated from the other *Cyclodomorphus* species by having broadly contacting nasal scales, separated prefrontal scales, a distinct postnarial groove and paravertebral scales much broader than adjacent dorsal body scales, is here referred to as the *Cyclodomorphus*