

The Scincid Lizard Genus *Caledoniscincus* (Reptilia: Scincidae) from New Caledonia in the Southwest Pacific: A Review of *Caledoniscincus austrocaledonicus* (Bavay) and Description of Six New Species from Province Nord

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ABSTRACT. The status of the New Caledonian scincid lizard *Caledoniscincus austrocaledonicus* (Bavay) is reviewed and found to comprise two species. The species conspecific with the designated neotype is widespread and morphologically diverse, the other is conspecific with *Euprepes haplorhinus* Günther and is also widespread in distribution. These two species occur in sympatry over much of their range, particularly on the west coast. Six new species of *Caledoniscincus* are described from the central and northern regions of the island, bringing to eleven the total number of species in the genus. The new species are restricted to closed forest habitat and have limited distributions, hence they are all regarded as vulnerable to disturbance of this habitat type. The eight species dealt with in this paper are recognised on the basis of combined morphological and genetic (allozyme) analysis of 36 populations representing all members in the genus.

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Some of the most common and widespread elements of the New Caledonian lizard fauna are the small scincid species in the genus *Caledoniscincus*. The last revision of the genus (Sadlier, 1986) identified four species, *C. austrocaledonicus*, *C. atropunctatus*, *C. festivus*, and *C. orestes*, all characterised

by marked sexual dimorphism in colour and pattern. *Caledoniscincus austrocaledonicus*, *C. festivus* and *C. atropunctatus* are widespread throughout the island, whereas *C. orestes* at the time of description (1986) was only known from mid-high (600–1,400 m asl) habitats on