

First record of *Tropidophorus cocincinensis* Duméril and Bibron, 1839 from Cambodia

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Abstract. In September 2008, a herpetofaunal survey was carried out in the Phnom Kulen National Park, Banteay Srey District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. A water skink of the genus *Tropidophorus* was collected, which differed from *Tropidophorus microlepis*, so far the only known species of *Tropidophorus* from Cambodia. A closer examination classified it as *Tropidophorus cocincinensis*, which we herein report as the first record for Cambodia. In addition, we comment on previous records of *T. cocincinensis* from Thailand.

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The Cochinchinese water skink *Tropidophorus cocincinensis* is well known from Vietnam (Smith, 1935; Dinh and Nguyen, 2000; Ziegler and Herrmann, 2000; Darevsky and Orlov, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2005, 2009; Bain et al., 2007; David and Ineich 2009). Although Chuaynkern et al. (2005) mentioned a few Laotian specimens, the occurrence of this species in Thailand was based on a single record by Smith (1919). However, Smith (1919) considered *T. microlepis* as a synonym of *T. cocincinensis* and he also indicated that the



Figure 1. (a) Dorsolateral and (b) ventral view of *Tropidophorus cocincinensis* (ZFMK 88378) from Phnom Kulen National Park, Banteay Srei District, Siem Reap Province, northwestern Cambodia. Photographs by T. Hartmann.

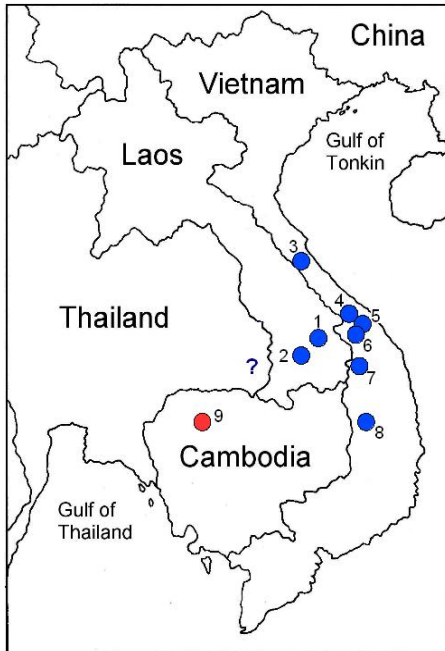


Figure 2. Map showing the distribution of *Tropidophorus cocincinensis*. LAOS: 1) Xe Kong, 2) Champasak; VIETNAM: 3) Quang Binh, 4) Thua Thien - Hue, 5) Da Nang, 6) Quang Nam, 7) Kon Tum, 8) Gia Lai; CAMBODIA: 9) Siem Reap; THAILAND: ?) Surin Province.

character “three preanal shields” - a diagnostic feature distinguishing *T. microlepis* from *T. cocincinensis* - was found in all 19 specimens from Chanthaburi Province, Thailand. Subsequently, Nabhitabhata *et al.* (2004) also recorded *T. cocincinensis* from Surin Province (Thailand) but without any voucher specimen. Therefore, beside the collections from Vietnam and Laos, no proof has been available for the occurrence of *T. cocincinensis* in Thailand or Cambodia.

A single specimen (ZFMK 88378, adult female) was collected on 2nd September 2008 by Timo Hartmann at Kbal Spean within Phnom Kulen National Park, Banteay Srey District, Siem Reap Province, Northwest Cambodia (13°41'N, 104°01'E), at an altitude of 278 m above sea level. Based on a differential morphological analysis this specimen can be assigned to *Tropidophorus cocincinensis* on the following characteristics: SVL 72 mm, tail length (TaL) 86 mm, TaL/SVL: 1.19; head scales explicitly rugose; a single, undivided frontonasal; supralabials 7/6, fifth largest and below the eye; loreals separated from supralabials by a series of small scales; midbody scales in 28 rows; dorsal scales strongly keeled; lateral scales backwardly oblique; two large asymmetrical preanal scales; two dorso-median series of

elevated spines on the tail being continuous with those on the dorsum; dorsum brown with dark marbling; laterals dark brown with a row of cream spots; venter yellow. It differs from *T. microlepis* by having the following features: 1) two large asymmetrical preanal scales (three in *T. microlepis*); 2) two dorsomedian series of elevated spines on the tail being continuous with those on the dorsum (not being continuous in *T. microlepis*). (identification according to Günther, 1861; Smith, 1935; Chuaynkern *et al.*, 2005; Ziegler *et al.*, 2005).

The Cambodian specimen was found in the evening at 5:45 pm peeking out of a crevice in a wet rock face close to a narrow rocky stream. The air temperature and humidity were 27°C and 81%, respectively. This constitutes the first record of *T. cocincinensis* for Cambodia and also the second known species of water skink from this country (beside *T. microlepis*).

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