



A new ground-dwelling species of *Cnemaspis* Strauch (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from the northern Western Ghats, Maharashtra, India

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Abstract

A new species of gecko of the genus *Cnemaspis* is described from the forests of the Western Ghats region of Maharashtra. *Cnemaspis kolhapurensis* sp. nov. is diagnosable by the following combination of characters: dorsal scales homogenous, small and feebly keeled; no spine-like tubercles on flanks, ventrals smooth, imbricate, 20–23 scale rows across venter, between lowest rows of dorsal scales. Supralabial I narrowly contacting nasal. Paired postmentals separated by one or two enlarged gular scales. A continuous series of 24–28 precloacal-femoral pores. The continuous series of precloacal and femoral pores exhibited by this species is unique among Indian members of the genus.

Key words: *Cnemaspis*, Gekkonidae, Maharashtra, description, northern Western Ghats, India

Introduction

Members of the genus *Cnemaspis* Strauch are Old World geckos with rounded pupils and slender digits and are mostly diurnal. They were removed from the genus *Gonatodes* (now restricted to the New World and considered part of the gekkotan family Sphaerodactylidae; Gamble *et al.* 2008) by Smith (1933). The strange, disjunct distribution exhibited by the more than 55 recognized species in tropical and subtropical Asia and tropical Africa, coupled with molecular phylogenetic data (Bauer *et al.* 2007), suggests that *Cnemaspis* is not monophyletic. However, each of the geographically disjunct groups currently assigned to the genus does constitute a clade (Bauer, Jackman & Greenbaum, unpublished), although morphological synapomorphies of these groups have yet to be critically evaluated.

Although new species have recently been described in the African clade (Bauer *et al.* 2006), and the south-east Asian clade (Das & Grismer 2003; Das & Leong 2004; Grismer & Das 2006; Grismer & Ngo 2007; Chan & Grismer 2008; Grismer & Chan 2008; Grismer, Chan, Nasir & Sumontha 2008; Grismer, Grismer, Wood & Chan 2008; Grismer *et al.* 2009), the greatest number of new taxa have been described in the south Asian clade, which includes the species occurring in India, Sri Lanka, and some or perhaps all of those in the Mentawai Archipelago of western Indonesia (Bauer 2002; Das 2005; Mukherjee *et al.* 2005; Wickramasinghe 2006; Bauer *et al.* 2007; Wickramasinghe & Munindradasa 2007; Manamendra-Arachchi *et al.* 2007). In peninsular India alone this genus is represented by 19 species. More than half of these were described in the 19th century: *C. indica* (Gray), *C. wynadensis* (Beddome), *C. sisparensis* (Theobald), *C. ornata* (Beddome), *C. beddomei* (Theobald), *C. mysoriensis* (Jerdon), *C. gracilis* (Beddome), *C. jerdoni* (Theobald), *C. boei* (Gray), *C. littoralis* (Jerdon). With the exception of *C. bireticulatus*, described by Annandale (1915), but synonymized with *C. sisparensis* by Smith (1935) almost 100 years elapsed before any