



A new arboreal species of *Cyrtopodion* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from Deh Akro-II Wetlands Complex, Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

A distinctive new thin-toed gecko, *Cyrtopodion dehakroense* **sp. nov.** is described from Deh Akro-II Wetlands Complex, Nawabshah, Sindh, bringing the number of species of this genus in Pakistan to nine. The major diagnostic characters of the new species include the presence of 7–9 very narrow, V-shaped, dark brown, transverse dorsal bands on the body from the nape to the level of the vent, four preloacal pores in males, absence of femoral pores, 21–25 rows of ventral scales across midbody, 92–102 scales along ventral midline of body, and presence of paired subcaudal scales under the post-pygial portion of the tail. The species is a desert form and has thus far been found only in sandy areas of this wetlands complex at mean elevations of about 10 m. Strictly nocturnal, it inhabits old-growth trees of *Prosopis cineraria* (Jand/Kandi) and feeds mainly on a variety of insects.

Key words: *Cyrtopodion*, Gekkonidae, new species, description, Desert Wetlands Complex, Pakistan

Introduction

The taxonomy of bent-toed and thin-toed geckos has been debated for many years (Smith 1935; Underwood 1954; Minton 1966; Mertens 1969). Szczerbak & Golubev (1986) comprehensively reviewed the geckos of the former USSR and adjoining areas, a center of diversity for this group. They divided the genus *Tenuidactylus* into three subgenera: *Cyrtopodion* Fitzinger, *Mediodactylus* Szczerbak & Golubev, and *Tenuidactylus* Szczerbak & Golubev. Khan (1989, 1991, 1993) discussed the taxonomy of these geckos and attempted to correct the arrangement of Szczerbak & Golubev (1984), at least for those species found in Pakistan, and elevated the subgenera to genera. Khan (2003) subsequently reviewed the Circum-Indus species of *Cyrtopodion*. Krysko *et al.* (2007) provided a brief review of the taxonomic history of the bent-toed geckos of Pakistan and described a new species, *Cyrtopodion brachykolon*. Khan (2008) tentatively placed *C. brachykolon* in the genus *Altigekko* on the basis of its morphology.

In Pakistan the family Gekkonidae is represented by 42 species and subspecies belonging to 13 different genera (Krysko *et al.* 2007; this paper). Eight species, three of them quite recently described (Khan 1991, 2001; Masroor 2008), can be assigned to the genus *Cyrtopodion*: *C. agamuroides*, *C. baigii*, *C. kachhense*, *C. kohsulaimanai*, *C. montiumsalsorum*, *C. potoharensis*, *C. scabrum*, and *C. watsoni*. A new species of *Cyrtopodion* is herein described from the desert Wetlands Complex of Deh Akro-II, Nawabshah District, Pakistan.