

A new species of *Hoplodactylus* (Reptilia: Pygopodidae) from the Takitimu Mountains, South Island, New Zealand

TONY R. JEWELL¹ & RICHARD A. B. LESCHEN^{2*}

¹ 216 Ripponvale Road, R.D., Cromwell, New Zealand

² New Zealand Arthropod Collection, Private Bag 92170, Auckland, New Zealand,
leschenr@landcareresearch.co.nz

* Address correspondence to R. Leschen

Abstract

A gecko from alpine scree in the Takitimu Mountains, South Island, New Zealand, is described as *Hoplodactylus cryptozoicus* n. sp. *Hoplodactylus cryptozoicus* is characterized by an orange mouth lining, a short tail, minute body scales, and a distinctive colour pattern which includes bright orange patches. It may be closely related to *H. nebulosus* (McCann) based on the sharing of grey pigment on the tongue. *Hoplodactylus cryptozoicus* is known from only a single locality and is one of the few species of *Hoplodactylus* in New Zealand that inhabits rocks in the alpine zone.

Key words: Reptilia; taxonomy; endemism; conservation

Introduction

The New Zealand gecko fauna presently comprises 18 validly named species placed into two endemic genera of the Diplodactylinae, *Hoplodactylus* Fitzinger 1843 and *Naultinus* Gray 1842. Both genera occur throughout the country and remain poorly studied with several species needing to be described. Most species, in fact, are threatened and/or of conservation importance (Hitchmough 2002). Even though there are only a handful of species, taxonomic revisions are lacking with the last monograph that of McCann (1955). Since that time five species were described in the 1980's (Robb 1980; Thomas 1981; Whittaker 1985), including the mysterious *Hoplodactylus delcourti* Bauer and Russell, the largest species of gecko in the world and known from a single specimen (Bauer and Russell 1986, 1987; Russell and Bauer 1986). While the described species have been covered in broader works (Bauer 1990; Bauer and Henle 1994) and handbooks (Gill and Whittaker 2001), there is much natural history and taxonomic information about New Zealand geckos residing in grey literature. Here we describe a new species of *Hoplodactylus* from the South Island, New Zealand, known in the grey literature (e.g., Hitchmough 2002) and by Kiwi herpetologists and naturalists.