



A list of herpetological type specimens in the collections of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery and University of Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

A catalogue of the amphibian and reptile type specimens in the collections of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and University of Papua New Guinea is provided, with collection data obtained from the registers of each collection, and comments on the current condition and whereabouts of the type specimens and discrepancies between data from different sources. A list of missing type specimens is appended. Primary type specimens of 43 species and secondary type specimens for 89 species are held in these collections. *Litoria hunti* Richards, Oliver, Dahl & Tjaturadi, 2006 is emended to *Litoria huntorum*, in accordance with the Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

Key words: Reptilia, Amphibia, Papua New Guinea, museum, type catalogue.

Introduction

Knowledge of the herpetological diversity of New Guinea continues to increase rapidly. While much of the taxonomic research on New Guinea's herpetofauna has been carried out at institutions outside Papua New Guinea, there are two institutions within that country containing significant herpetological collections: the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (PNGM) and the Natural Science Resource Centre of the School of Natural and Physical Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), both in Port Moresby, the national capital.

Although the National Museum was created in 1953, significant natural history collections did not commence until the appointment of Roy Mackay as preparator-in-charge in 1965. Several thousand reptile and amphibian specimens were added to the collections over the next seven years (Annual Reports of the museum refer to between 22 and 982 herpetological specimens per annum during this period), until his departure in 1972. In the early 1970s, herpetological collections accumulated by the Wildlife Section of the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF) were amalgamated with the Museum collection, and the entire collection was held by DASF (where Fred Parker was involved in identification and registration of the backlog of material) pending the creation of a new museum building in the late 1970s. In 1974, Fred Scott was appointed Curator of Natural History, and by 1976, the herpetological collection stood at approximately 5000 specimens, of which 2000 remained unregistered. James Menzies was Curator of Natural History from approximately 1983 to 1987. The current curator of natural history is Ilaiah Bigilale.

The herpetological collection at the University began in 1967 under the supervision of James Menzies, who was also the major collector. Menzies supervised the collection until 1977, when he left Papua New Guinea for several years. In 1978, he was replaced by John Pernetta, who was assisted in the early 1980s by