



## A new ground-dwelling *Hemidactylus* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from Maharashtra, with a key to the *Hemidactylus* of India

VARAD B. GIRI<sup>1</sup> & AARON M. BAUER<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bombay Natural History Society, Herpetology Section, Collection Department, Hornbill House, S. B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023, India. E-mail: varadgiri@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Biology, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085, USA.  
E-mail: aaron.bauer@villanova.edu

<sup>3</sup>Corresponding author

### Abstract

A distinctive new species of ground-dwelling gecko of the genus *Hemidactylus* is described from the plateaus of the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, India. It is a member of a group of chiefly terrestrial Indian *Hemidactylus* species that have undivided, or only partly divided subdigital lamellae. The new species is most similar in appearance to the lowland-inhabiting *Hemidactylus albofasciatus* Grandison & Soman, 1963, but can be distinguished by its larger size and a suite of distinctive scalation and coloration characters. A key to the species of *Hemidactylus* currently known from the Republic of India is provided.

**Key Words:** *Hemidactylus*, Gekkonidae, India, Maharashtra, description, northern Western Ghats

### Introduction

The genus *Hemidactylus*, with at least 85 recognized species is the second most speciose genus of gekkonid lizards in the world (Kluge 2001; Bauer & Pauwels 2002; Henle & Böhme 2003; Baha El Din 2003, 2005; Bauer et al. 2007). The genus is widely distributed throughout much of the Old World tropics and subtropics as well as in the Mediterranean region and in the Americas. However, the great majority of *Hemidactylus* species have relatively small distributions confined to southern Asia and Africa. In India this is one of the dominant genera of nocturnal geckos and is represented by 21 species. Smith (1935) listed 14 species of Indian *Hemidactylus*: *H. maculatus* (in part) Duméril & Bibron, 1836; *H. triedrus* Daudin, 1802; *H. subtriedrus* Jerdon, 1853; *H. brookii* Gray, 1845; *H. prashadi* Smith, 1935; *H. gracilis* Blanford, 1870; *H. reticulatus* Beddome, 1870; *H. frenatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1836; *H. leschenaultii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836; *H. flaviviridis* Rüppel, 1835; *H. giganteus* Stoliczka, 1871; *H. bowringii* (Gray, 1845); *H. garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836; *H. karenorum* (Theobald, 1868). Loveridge (1947) considered *Lophopholis* as a synonym of *Hemidactylus* and thus added one more species to this genus, *H. scabriceps* (Annandale, 1906). Grandison and Soman, 1963 described *H. albofasciatus* from Maharashtra. This species has often been allocated to the genus *Teratolepis* (e.g., Kluge, 1967, 2001; Das, 2003), but current phylogenetic data reveals that this genus should be subsumed within *Hemidactylus* (Bauer et al. 2008). Later, Sharma (1981) described *H. porbandarensis* from Porbandar, Gujarat and in 1983, Shukla described *H. mahendrai* from Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Based on the similarity in digital morphology, the monotypic Indian genus *Dravidogecko* was synonymised with *Hemidactylus* by Bauer and Russell (1995), making *H. anamallensis* the nineteenth representative of the group. The most recent addition to the Indian *Hemidactylus* fauna resulted from the discovery of *H. persicus* from Gujarat