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On the type specimens of the recently described Sulawesi pitviper *Tropidolaemus laticinctus* Kuch, Gumprecht & Melaun 2007 (Squamata: Viperidae)

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Until recently, the Asiatic pitviper genus *Tropidolaemus* Wagler, 1830 comprised only two species, the rare *T. huttoni* (Smith, 1949) from India and *T. wagleri* (Boie, 1827) (for discussion about authorship and data of publication see Vogel et al. 2007), which is known to represent a polytypic complex of morphologically distinct species occurring in South Vietnam and from the Malaysian Peninsula through Sumatra, Borneo, the Philippines and on Sulawesi (Iskandar & Colijn 2001, Vogel 2006). In a first paper of a comprehensive taxonomic revision of the *T. wagleri* complex, Vogel et al. (2007) demonstrated that these widespread and medically important venomous snakes actually represent at least three different taxa (*wagleri*, *subannulatus*, and *philippensis*), of which *T. wagleri* sensu stricto is restricted to Southern Thailand, West Malaysia as well as Sumatra and some adjacent islands. Therein, the green form of Sulawesi pitviper population (in addition to those of Borneo, and most Philippine islands) was preliminary assigned to the taxon *subannulatus* Gray, 1842.

Despite the high variability shown in colour pattern of several (island) populations of the *T. wagleri* complex, as far as is known most areas are inhabited by only one form. On the island of Sulawesi, however, at the eastern boundary of the distribution range two strikingly differently-coloured forms of pitvipers occur sympatrically. These are (1) a common green colour morph with white and reddish-brown or bluish paired cross bands dorsally in combination with an above white bordered reddish-brown postocular streak and (2) a rare and rich in contrast coloured morph with an intensive dorsal pattern of broad white-bordered reddish-brown cross bands separated by green parts and a broad brown lateral stripe at the head. These colourful specimens were only recently described as *T. laticinctus* by Kuch *et al*. (2007) who did not discuss the phenomenon of sympatry of two species of this genus.

Probably, the green morph of Sulawesi pitvipers shows a colour-correlated sexual dimorphism as seen in species of the closely-related genus *Trimeresurus*, viz. for instance in *T. popeiorum* and *T. gumprechti* (Vogel *et al*. 2004). While the dorsal pattern of some specimens consists of white and reddish-brown cross markings, other specimens show a white and blue pattern on a green ground colour (e.g., Vogel *et al.* 2007).

Anticipating a forthcoming taxonomic revision, Iskandar & Colijn (2001) distinguished four different subspecies of *T. wagleri*, referring the Sulawesi population to *T. w. celebensis* Gray, 1849. In contrast, Vogel *et al*. (2007) and Kuch *et al.* (2007) allocated the populations of Sulawesi, Borneo, and the Philippines to an operational *T. subannulatus* complex. Furthermore, Vogel *et al*. (2007) mentioned that the name *Tropidolaemus celebensis* (Gray, 1849) would be available for pitviper populations inhabiting Sulawesi if they would prove to be distinct from green coloured *T. subannulatus* sensu stricto and *T. laticinctus*.

Originally, Gray (1849) established distinct varieties of *T. wagleri* all of which, however, have been synonymised with the monotypic form by Leviton (1964). Boulenger (1897, pl. XV) was the first to illustrate the drawing of a specimen of the red Sulawesi form collected by Paul and Fritz Sarasin in Central Sulawesi. He recognised five unnamed colour forms of which the afore mentioned was called variety "E" (Boulenger 1896, 1897). The first picture – although being just black and white – of this colour morph was depicted by Heinrich (1932: 191) providing a direct comparison between the green and the red Sulawesi forms of *Tropidolaemus*. Eventually, de Lang & Vogel (2005) provided the first colour photograph of a live specimen of *T. laticinctus*.

Recently, however, Kuch *et al.* (2007) described the red-banded form of Sulawesi pitviper as a new species, *Tropidolaemus laticinctus*, apparently distinguishable only by differences in colour pattern. The new taxon is based on the examination of five voucher specimens, the holotype collected by P. and F. Sarasin being deposited in the BMNH (Brit-

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