



A new species of *Cyrtopodion* (Sauria: Gekkonidae) from the northern areas of Pakistan

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Abstract

A new thin-toed gecko, *Cyrtopodion baigii* is described from the Chilas area in the Chilas Arc Complex of northern Pakistan. The major diagnostic characters of the new species include the presence of two precloacal pores in males, absence of femoral pores, 30–32 rows of ventral scales across midbody and 125–132 scales along ventral midline of body. The species is a montane form, distributed in the rocky areas along the Indus River at elevations of 1100–1200 m. It is the first member of the genus *Cyrtopodion* to be reported from the Himalayan and Karakoram range systems in Pakistan.

Key words: Description, Thin-toed gecko, High altitude, Himalayan-Karakoram Range, 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 then USSR and adjoining areas, a center of diversity for this group. They divided the genus *Tenuidactylus* into three sub-genera: *Tenuidactylus* (Szczerbak & Golubev, 1984), *Cyrtopodion* (Fitzinger, 1843) and *Mediodactylus* (Szczerbak & Golubev, 1977). Khan (1989, 1991) discussed the taxonomy of these geckos in detail. Khan (1991, 1993) at one hand tried to correct the arrangements of these geckos, at least those related to Pakistan and simultaneously raised the sub-genera of Szczerbak & Golubev (1984) to full genera. A brief review of the taxonomic history of the bent-toed geckos of Pakistan was provided recently by Krysko et al. (2007).

In Pakistan the family Gekkonidae is represented by 41 recognized species and subspecies belonging to 13 different genera (Krysko et al, 2007). Among these, eight belong to genus *Cyrtopodion*, three quite recently described (Khan, 1991, 2001; Krysko et al., 2007): *C. montiumsalsorum*, *C. kohsulaimanai*, *C. agamuroides*, *C. kachhense*, *C. scabrum*, *C. potoharensis*, *Cyrtopodion brachykolon* and *C. watsoni*. Khan (2003) has subsequently reviewed the Circum-Indus species of *Cyrtopodion*. A new species of *Cyrtopodion* is herein described from the montane northern areas of Pakistan.

Materials and methods

Field studies were carried out for the collection and observation of amphibians and reptiles in April and July 2006 and were repeated in May 2007 as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment of the herpetofauna of the Diamer Basha Dam area for the National Development Consultant (NDC) Pvt. Ltd. and WAPDA (Water