



A new species of *Dibamus* (Squamata: Dibamidae) from Pulau Simeuleu, Mentawai Archipelago, Indonesia

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Abstract

A new species of *Dibamus* from Pulau Simeuleu, off the south-west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, is described based on material collected by Edward Jacobson and previously assigned to *D. novaeguineae* by de Rooij (1922). *Dibamus tebal sp. nov.* differs from all congeners in showing the following combination of characters: SVL 133.5 mm, body relatively robust, body width 4.9% SVL, postoculars two, midbody scale rows 24, scales around neck 24, scales around vent 15, ventrals 186, subcaudals 42, frontonasal entire, rostral suture incomplete, labial and nasal sutures complete, two pairs of preanal pores, nuchal collar or body band absent, presacral vertebrae 119, postsacral vertebrae 26, and a relatively long tail (18.6% SVL).

Key words: *Dibamus*, Dibamidae, systematics, new species, Pulau Simeuleu, Indonesia

Introduction

The family Dibamidae comprises two genera- *Anelytropsis* Cope, 1885 (from north-eastern México) and *Dibamus* Duméril & Bibron, 1839 (from south-eastern and eastern Asia)- of poorly-known fossorial squamates (Greer, 1985). Recent evidence points to an early divergence in the evolutionary history of the squamates (Townsend *et al.*, 2004). Species of *Dibamus* measure 8.6–20.3 mm in SVL and are characterized by a single, fused parietal bone; pleurodont dentition; no pterygoid teeth; no limbs in females; males with small, flaplike hind limbs; external ear-openings absent; vestigial eyes covered by a scale; large, plate-like scales on snout and on mandible; body covered with smooth, cycloid scales; osteoderms absent; over 26 presacral vertebrae; both ends of body blunt; and tail short, showing autotomy (Greer, 1985; Pough *et al.*, 2001; Zug *et al.*, 2001). The eggshell (known only from *Dibamus alfredi*) is highly calcareous and near-term embryos bear two large premaxillary teeth (Underwood & Lee, 2000).

Since the first catalogues of saurian squamates, those of Gray (1845) and Boulenger (1887), through to the time of de Rooij (1915), the genus *Dibamus* has been treated as monotypic, the distribution of the single species (*novaeguineae*) thought to be "Nicobars; Archipelago from Sumatra to New Guinea" (de Rooij, 1915). The next fundamental work on the genus by Greer (1985) recognized several species within this range, most with rather restricted distributions. The last two decades have witnessed vigorous field collections in the region, leading to the collection of new material, and a better understanding of both species boundaries and the distribution of these fossorial squamates, restricting *Dibamus novaeguineae* to western New Guinea. At the last count, 20 nominal species were recognized (Das & Lim, 2005; Uetz, 2009).

Early collections on the archipelagos of what is now Republic of Indonesia were done by the staff of the