



A new species of bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus*: Gekkonidae) from Seram Island, Indonesia

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Abstract

A new species of *Cyrtodactylus* is described from the island of Seram, Maluku Province, Indonesia. *Cyrtodactylus nuaulu* sp. nov. can be distinguished from other described *Cyrtodactylus* by the combination of moderate size, dorsal colouration consisting of relatively few large dark brown blotches, presence of a precloacal groove and whorls of dentate tubercles extending the length of the tail. The new species is the fourth reptile currently known only from Seram and surrounding islands, and the herpetofauna of this area appears to include a small but biogeographically significant endemic component.

Key words: *Cyrtodactylus*, Gekkonidae, Maluku, Wallacea

Introduction

With over 100 recognised species, *Cyrtodactylus* is the most speciose genus of gekkonid lizards (Hayden *et al.* 2008; Uetz & Hallerman 2009). However, it is clear that diversity is still underestimated and new species are being described from across the range of the genus at a rapid rate (e.g. Bauer 2003; Batuwita & Bahir 2005; Rösler *et al.* 2007; Ngo & Bauer 2008; see Uetz & Hallerman 2009 for the most complete list of recent descriptions). While many new species are morphologically similar to known forms and can only be differentiated with careful morphological analysis (Batuwita & Bahir 2005), others are highly distinctive and difficult to confuse with any known species (Kraus 2007; Hayden *et al.* 2008; Linkem *et al.* 2008).

The Indonesian Maluku Islands lie to the east of Wallace's Line in a region known as Wallacea, at the interchange of the Asian and Australian biogeographic zones. The herpetofauna of these islands is poorly documented, with few recent targeted surveys (Edgar & Lilley 1993). Currently, the known *Cyrtodactylus* fauna of the Maluku Islands is depauperate, with just two recognised species *C. halmahericus* (Mertens) and *C. deveti* (Brongersma). The former is a relatively small mottled species known from across the archipelago (Hayden *et al.* 2008; Iskandar pers obs.). The latter is very poorly known and apparently restricted to the northern island of Halmahera. While conducting field research on the southern Maluku Island of Seram in the 1980's two of the authors (PE & RL) collected a small series of a distinctive *Cyrtodactylus* that is readily distinguished from all congeners, both from Maluku and elsewhere in the range of the genus. This species is described herein.