



A new species of *Proablepharus* (Scincidae: Lygosominae) from Mt Surprise, north-eastern Queensland, Australia

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Abstract

Proablepharus barrylyoni **sp. nov.** is described from a single locality near Mt Surprise, north-eastern Queensland. It is distinguished from its congeners by the following character states: body longitudinally striped, four supraoculars, five supraciliaries, frontoparietals fused to interparietal, upper preocular well-developed, two postsupralabials, lamellae beneath digits of pes smoothly rounded. The species was last collected in 1981 and, using criteria prescribed in the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act, Wildlife Regulation 1994*, qualifies as Vulnerable.

Key words: Scincidae, *Proablepharus*, new species, Queensland, Australia, conservation status

Introduction

The skink described herein was first found during fauna survey work by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1976. This work was conducted along the upper Lynd River near Mt Surprise (north-eastern Queensland) and was an adjunct to a Freshwater Crocodile research program than ran from 1976 to 1995. The surveys were initially aimed at sampling riverine habitats to assess vertebrate species that might interact with the local crocodile population but were later extended into other nearby habitats (Limpus 1984; Tucker *et al.*, 1996, 1997).

Methods

Survey effort: The surveys took place in August and September and the effort was largely centred on the cattle stations (Amber, Burlington and Springfield) along the upper Lynd River and its tributary creeks. All major vegetation associations were investigated on both granitic and basaltic soils. The search effort ran over a number of years (1979 to 1984) and included numerous drift-fence trapping events in association with daytime rolling of logs and rocks, daytime searches amongst leaf-litter and spotlighting with low intensity beams along roads and stream margins. In all, 29 specimens of the new species were retained as vouchers. This work also resulted in the discovery of another locally distributed skink, *Lerista storri* Greer *et al.*, 1983.

Specimen examination: All specimens examined are lodged in the collection of the Queensland Museum (QM). All body measurements were taken using Mitutoyo electronic callipers. Supraocular, supraciliary, supralabial, postsupralabial and nuchal scales were counted on both sides of specimens examined (see Figure 2 for definitions of head scalation). All other bilateral counts were recorded on the left side only (unless damaged). Tails were assessed by eye only and the length provided in the description is based on the longest tail measured which appeared to be original. Abbreviations for body measurements are as follows: snout-vent