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A new species of *Cyrtodactylus* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from the karst forest of northern Laos

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Abstract

We describe a new species of the gekkonid genus *Cyrtodactylus* on the basis of two specimens collected from limestone forests of Luang Prabang Province, northern Laos. Morphologically, the new species is distinguishable from its congeners by a combination of the following diagnostic characters: maximum SVL 86.1 mm; supralabials 9 or 10; infralabials 7–9; dorsal tubercles in 15 or 16 rows at midbody; ventral scale rows 34–36 at midbody; precloacal groove absent; femoral scales not distinctly enlarged; precloacal pores absent in females (unknown in males); subdigital lamellae under the fourth finger 18 or 19, under the fourth toe 18–20; subcaudals not transversally enlarged; dorsal bands white, 4 or 5 between limb insertions plus another one between hind limbs; tail banded. Based on molecular analyses, the new species is clustered in the same clade with *C. wayakonei* and two other species from Luang Prabang and Houaphan provinces.

Key words: Bent-toed gecko, limestone forest, phylogeny, taxonomy, Luang Prabang Province

Introduction

With 186 recognized species, *Cyrtodactylus* is one of the most diverse genera of lizards in terms of species richness (Uetz & Hosek 2014). Since 2010, 63 species have been described in the genus and most of these new discoveries were from Southeast Asian countries (Nguyen *et al.* 2013; Ziegler *et al.* 2013; Grismer *et al.* 2014; Luu *et al.* 2014; Phung *et al.* 2014; Pauwels & Sumontha 2014; Pauwels *et al.* 2013, 2014; Schneider *et al.* 2014; Uetz & Hosek 2014). A major factor for the high species diversity of bent-toed geckos in Southeast Asia is the presence of a large area of tropical rain forest and a number of species complexes. For instance, 10 new species have been described within the *Cyrtodactylus irregularis* species complex from the Indochina region and eight new species were discovered in the *C. pulchellus* species complex from the Thai-Malay Peninsula (Grismer *et al.* 2012; Sumontha *et al.* 2012; Nguyen *et al.* 2013; Schneider *et al.* 2014). In Laos, nine species of *Cyrtodactylus* are currently recognized and seven of them have been recorded from limestone karst forests, namely *C. interdigitalis* Ulber, 1993 and *C. pageli* Schneider, Nguyen, Schmitz, Kingsada, Auer & Ziegler, 2011 from Vientiane Province; *C. lomyenensis* Ngo & Pauwels, 2010, *C. roesleri* Ziegler, Nazarov, Orlov, Nguyen, Vu, Dang, Dinh & Schmitz, 2010, and *C. jaegeri* Luu, Calame, Bonkowski, Nguyen & Ziegler, 2014 from Khammuane Province; *C. wayakonei* Nguyen, Kingsada, Rösler, Auer & Ziegler, 2010 from Luang Nam Tha Province; and *C. teyniei* David, Nguyen,

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