

OCCASIONAL PAPERS
OF THE
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

No. 32, 4 pages, 2 figures.

December 31, 1961

**A NEW SPHENOMORPHID LIZARD
FROM PALAWAN ISLAND, PHILIPPINES**

By

Walter C. Brown

*Menlo College, Menlo Park,
California and Natural History
Museum, Stanford University*

and

Angel C. Alcalá

*Silliman University,
Philippine Islands*

The sphenomorphid lizards are represented by more than 60 nominal species in the Oriental and Australian zoogeographic regions. Only 2 of the species previously recorded, however, *Lygosoma (Sphenomorphus) scutirostrum* Peters (1873, p. 743) from eastern Australia and *Lygosoma (Sphenomorphus) cophias* Boulenger (1908, p. 67) from Malay Peninsula, lack an external ear opening, its position being marked by a scale-covered depression.

Three specimens of a third, undescribed species, belonging to this group were taken by members of the Stanford-Silliman Expedition to Palawan Island during the period March – May, 1961. Two specimens were collected from beneath rotting logs on the forest floor and one was found in the stomach of a snake.

The Stanford-Silliman Expedition to Palawan Island was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Illustrations were prepared by Mr. Walter Zawoski of the Stanford Research Institute.

Lygosoma (Sphenomorphus) palawanensis Brown and Alcalá, new species.
(Figures 1 and 2.)

DIAGNOSIS. A small species of *Sphenomorphus* with ear opening covered by scales, its position indicated only by a depression; 22-24 midbody scale rows; 48-54 dorsal scale rows between the parietals and the base of the tail; 10-12 lamellae beneath the fourth toe; prefrontals fused with the frontonasal; preanals enlarged.

HOLOTYPE. Stanford University Reptile Register no. 23122, adult male, collected May 1, 1961 beneath a rotting log in dipterocarp forest at an altitude of about 100 meters on the northeast side of Central Peak (Malabo Peak) about 8 kilometers southwest of Iwahig, Palawan Island.

PARATYPES. California Academy of Sciences 91205 collected at the same locality as the holotype, and SU 23124 from the stomach of a snake, *Sybnophis bivittatus*. The snake was taken under leaves on the forest floor at about 900 meters on the northeast slope of Central Peak (Malabo Peak).

DESCRIPTION. A small species of *Sphenomorphus*, snout-vent length 29-34 mm. for 3 mature specimens; habitus slender; snout relatively short and round-pointed; its length about one-fifth the distance from the tip of the snout to the fore limb; prefrontals and frontonasal fused; frontal much longer than broad, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as long as the fronto-parietals which are distinct; interparietal as long as the frontal; 4 supraoculars, no nuchals; no postnasal; fourth supralabial beneath the center of the eye; temporals enlarged; scales smooth, glossy; 22-24 midbody scale rows; 48-54 dorsal scale rows between the parietals and the base of the tail; preanals enlarged; limbs well developed but short, length of hind limb about 25 per cent of the snout-vent length; adpressed limbs widely separated; 10-12 lamellae beneath the fourth toe of the hind foot.

Measurements (in mm.) of holotype: Snout-vent length, 30; snout-fore limb, 9; axilla-groin, 17; hind limb, $7\frac{1}{2}$.

COLOR. Mottled brownish on the dorsum and lateral surfaces, the latter somewhat darker with a concentration of darker brown giving the impression of a longitudinal band along the dorsolateral region. This is bordered dorsally in 2 specimens by a very light line. Venter pale cream, blotched with brown on the tail and one specimen with a few brown spots on the head and throat regions.

This species is readily distinguished from *L. cophias*, from the Malay Peninsula to which it is probably most closely related, on the basis of the prefrontals being fused with the frontonasal and the enlarged preanals.

It is distinguished from *L. scutirostrum*, from Australia, by the smaller size, the greater number of midbody scale rows, the greater number of lamellae beneath the fourth toe, lack of nuchals, the longer and narrower frontal, and the more depressed head and snout.

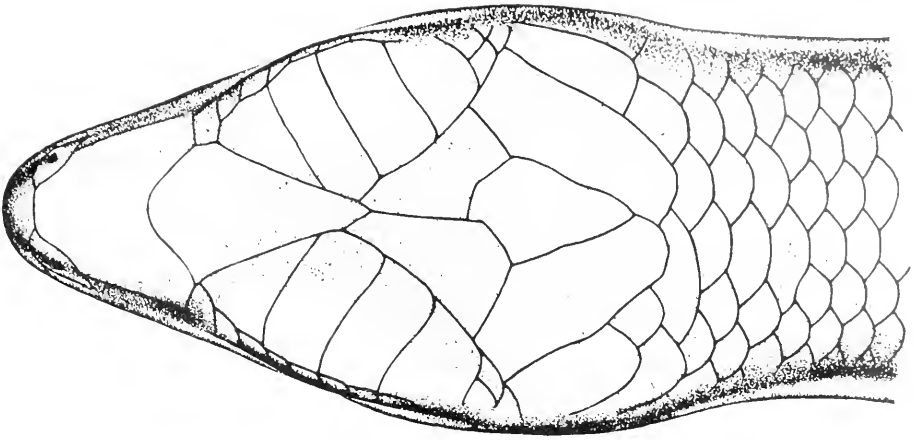


Figure 1. *Lygosoma (Sphenomorphus) palawanensis* Brown and Alcala, new species. Dorsal view of head of paratype, CAS 91205.

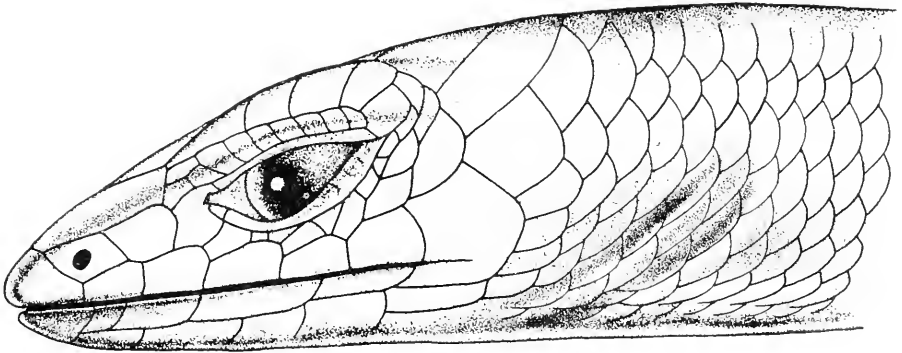


Figure 2. *Lygosoma (Sphenomorphus) palawanensis* Brown and Alcala, new species. Lateral view of head of paratype, CAS 91205.

LITERATURE CITED

BOULENGER, GEORGE ALBERT

1908. Report on the Gunong Tohan expedition, May—September, 1905. III. Fishes, batrachians and reptiles. *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums*, 3:61—69, pls. 4—5.

PETERS, WILHELM CARL HARTWIG

1873. Über neue Saurier (*Sphaeriodoctylus*, *Anolis*, *Phrynosoma*, *Trapidolepisma*, *Lygosoma*, *Ophioscineus*) aus Centralamerika, Mexico und Australien. Monatsberichte der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (1874), pp. 738—747.

