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ZOOLOGICAL SERIES
OF
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Volume 24

CHICAGO, JANUARY 31, 1941

No. 16

**REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS FROM
CENTRAL ARABIA**

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A small series of reptiles and amphibians collected during recent journeys in central Arabia and presented to Field Museum by Mr. H. St. J. B. Philby forms a welcome addition to Field Museum's collections from southwestern Asia. That the fauna of this region is still far from completely known is again brought to our attention by the presence of an extremely distinct new skink of the genus *Scincus* in Mr. Philby's collection. The fact that the list of reptiles collected by Mr. Philby on his expedition through the Rub' al Khali in 1932 (Parker, 1933) is entirely different from the present one, though unquestionably in part fortuitous, is further testimony to the geographic diversity of the Arabian fauna.

The map showing localities from which specimens are here reported is the work of Mr. Peter Gerhard, a volunteer cartographer in the Department of Anthropology. This has been drawn under the direction of Dr. Henry Field, whose continued interest in southwestern Asia has contributed so much to the growth of our collections from that area. These collections have recently been listed in our Zoological Series (Schmidt, 1939). The figure of the head of the new lizard is by John J. Janecek.

***Bufo viridis viridis* Laurenti.**

Three specimens from Hail (31655) and three from Hulaifa (31655a).

***Ptyodactylus hasselquistii hasselquistii* Donndorff.**

Eight specimens from Riyadh (31653).

***Agama pallida* Reuss.**

Two specimens from the plain of Sa'ira, one from Butain Plain, and one from Wadi ar Rima (31660-63).

Agama persica Blanford.

Two from Wādi ar Rima (31658–59).

The curious fact that this species has not been reported from Iran since its original description, though supposedly abundant and widespread in the Mesopotamian region, while *Agama agilis*, whose type locality is Baghdad, is known only from Iran, suggests some unexplained confusion of species.

Agama stellio stellio Linnaeus.

One specimen from Jabal Ajā, in a rocky ravine (31656).

Uromastix aegyptius Forskål.

One from Wādi Sirra (31641), one from Midbar ridges on the Medina-Hāil road (31642), two from plain of Sa'ira (31643–44), one from Butain Plain (31030), and one from the desert near 'Anaiza (31032).

Varanus griseus Daudin.

A single specimen from Jidda (31645).

Acanthodactylus fraseri Boulenger.

Acanthodactylus fraseri Boulenger, Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., 25, p. 373, 1918—Zobeya, Shariba, Lower Mesopotamia (now Iraq).

A single juvenile specimen from 'Anaiza (31652).

Scincus philbyi sp. nov.

Type from 'Anaiza, Saudi Arabia. No. 31664 Field Museum of Natural History. Adult female. Collected June 11, 1938, by H. St. J. B. Philby.

Diagnosis.—A species of *Scincus* with the ear opening extremely obscure; 28 scales around the body; six supraoculars; rostral in contact with the internasal; prefrontals fused to form a single transverse shield; female with bold, dark brown spots on sides. Distinguished from *Scincus scincus* by its united prefrontals, more obscure ear-opening, and by the dark lateral spots in the female.

Description of type.—Body of the normal *Scincus* type; ear opening extremely obscure, marked by a slightly modified scale, separated from the rictus by two scales; snout produced, elongate; rostral much enlarged with a sharp horizontal edge, broadly in contact with the large internasal; internasal broadly in contact with the single transverse prefrontal; frontal elongate, narrowed behind;

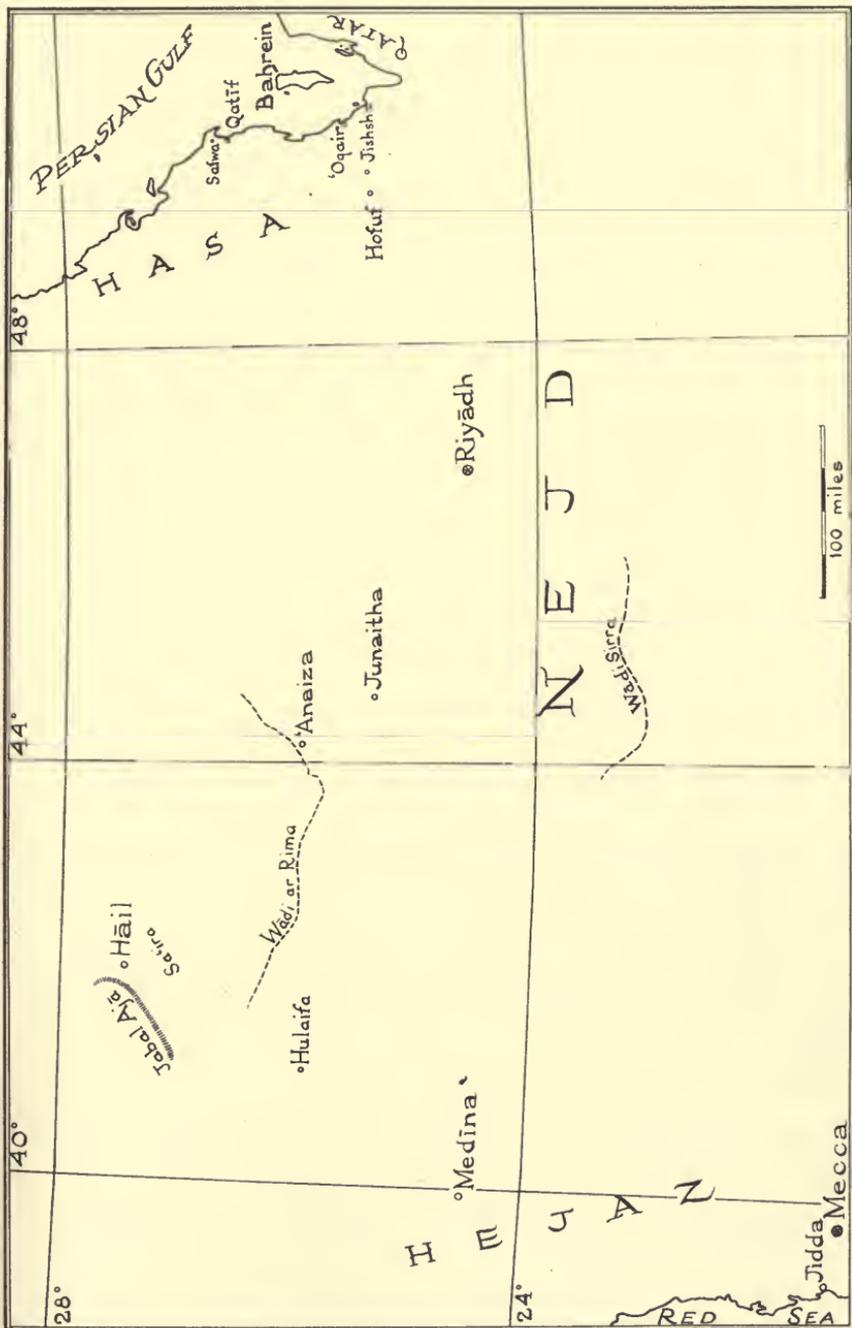


FIG. 17. Localities from which specimens are listed.

six supraoculars; four superciliaries, the first much the longest, frontoparietals small; interparietal small, separating the two pairs of parietals, which are followed by four nuchals on each side; nasal, with the elongate nostril, smaller than supranasal; two elongate loreals on each side; four suboculars; temporals 2-2 on each side; upper labials 8-8; lower labials 7-7; two median postmentals; 26 scales at mid-body, 28 at a point slightly posterior; dorsals 57 from a point opposite the posterior face of the thighs to the interparietal;

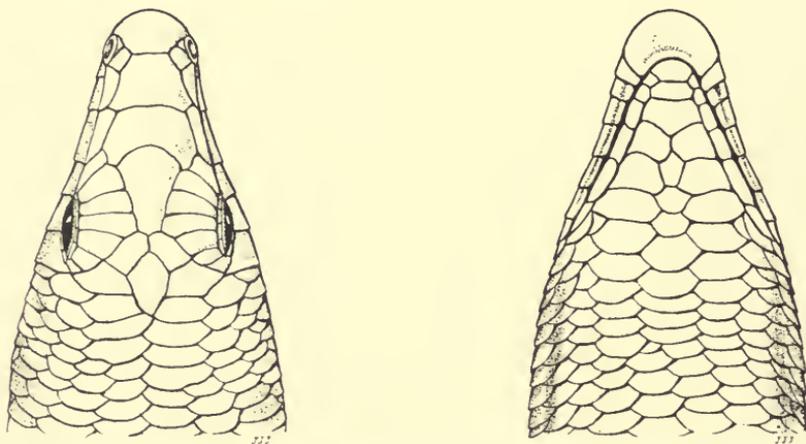


FIG. 18. Head of *Scincus philbyi* sp. nov., dorsal and ventral views.

a pair of large anal plates; 60 ventrals from anals to a point opposite the rictus; 10 lamellae beneath the fourth toe; expansions of the digital lamellae well developed.

Brown above, paler on the sides and venter, with large chocolate brown spots on the sides (four on the left, five on the right); these spots about as high as wide, covering 4 to 6 scales; dorsal scales each with one or two light spots.

Measurements.—Total length 177, tail 77.

Notes on paratypes.—Eleven paratypes, four females and seven males (No. 28599), all collected at the same locality as the type, are in excellent agreement with the type. All have the single prefrontal, and all the females bear the prominent lateral spots (four to six in number), while the males are entirely without them. All have 28 scales around the body; the number of dorsals varies from 56 to 62; the number of ventrals from 60 to 68; the nuchals from 2-3 to 5-5; lamellae beneath the fourth toe 10 or 11; tail length 0.38 to 0.44

of the total length in females, average 0.40, and from 0.37 to 0.45 in males, average 0.42.

Remarks.—*Scincus philbyi* can scarcely be regarded as a geographic form of any species already known. The considerable number of species of *Scincus* appears to be correlated with their restriction to the dune sand habitat, and consequent isolation by intervening rock desert. The west Algerian form described by Werner as *Scincus officinalis laterimaculata* (1914, p. 13, pl., fig. 3) agrees closely with the form here described in color pattern; presumably it has the normal pair of prefrontals of *Scincus scincus*. *Scincus meccensis* has fewer scales around the body and five supraoculars; it agrees with *philbyi* in the presence of brown spots on the sides, but these are two or three in number. *Scincus mitranus* Anderson is recorded from Jafura and the Rub' al Khali by Parker (1933, p. 398); while this species has reddish brown lateral spots like those of *philbyi*, it is described as having five supraoculars and two prefrontals.

Coluber rhodorhachis Jan.

One specimen from Wādi Sirra (31649) and three from Jidda (31646-48). Ventrals in two males and one female from the latter locality are 220, 224, and 224; the female specimen from Wādi Sirra has 235 ventrals. All these specimens represent the immaculate gray phase of this species.

Spalerosophis cliffordii Schlegel.

A single specimen from Hulaifa (31650), and a female from Jidda (31651). Ventrals and caudals respectively 215 and 76, and 215 and 71.

Aspis cerastes Laurenti.

A single female, without horns, from Junaitha (31654), with 153 ventrals and 33 caudals.

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