

## First record of the peninsula supple skink *Lygosoma peninsulare* in Thailand

HARRY WARD-SMITH<sup>1\*</sup> & RUPERT GRASSBY-LEWIS<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>144 Coombe Lane, London, UK

<sup>2</sup>Explore Herpetology, London, UK

\*Corresponding author e-mail: [harry\\_ws@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:harry_ws@hotmail.co.uk)



**Figure 1.** Dorsal view of *Lygosoma peninsulare* from Betong, Yala, Thailand

The peninsula supple skink *Lygosoma peninsulare* was described in 2018 from two specimens collected from Peninsula Malaysia (Grismer et al., 2018). The holotype was collected in 2016 in Kelantan state while a historical specimen was uncovered, originating from Bukit Larut (Boulenger, 1900; Grismer et al., 2018). The species is distinguished from other skinks on the Thai-Malay peninsula by having a robust yellowish-brown body, red tail, and distinctive dark eye patches. It is larger than other supple skinks on the peninsula with a maximum recorded snout-vent length of 119 mm. Despite its large size, the lack of records indicates its extreme rarity and very little is known of its natural history.

Herein we present the first record of *L. peninsulare* from Thailand (Fig. 1). On 6 April 2022 at 22:42 h, in Betong District, Yala, Thailand (5.85567° N, 101.25267° E, 606 m a.s.l.) during a herpetological survey in primary malayan mixed-dipterocarp rainforest, the authors were alerted to the presence of the lizard when a flash of red was seen leaping at the buttress of a large tree. The skink was jumping up towards a cicada nymph in the process of climbing the buttress, which it ferociously caught and swallowed. The skink was extremely fast-moving and capable of ‘swimming’ through leaf litter, rapidly, burying itself within ground debris.

A second specimen from Thailand was uncovered having previously been identified as *Subdoluseps bowringi*. A young individual (Fig. 2) was found on 22 November 2011 in a pitfall trap in the disturbed lowland forest of Khor Hong Hill, Hat Yai

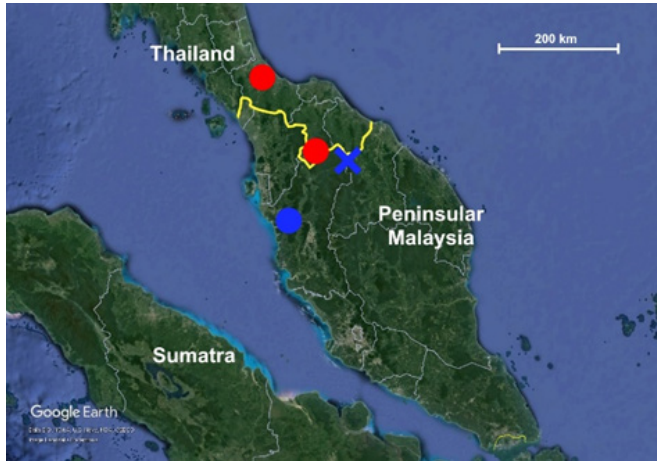


**Figure 1.** Dorsal view of *Lygosoma peninsulare* from Hat Yai, Songkhla, Thailand

District, Songkhla, Thailand (7.02555° N, 100.51555° E, 240 m a.s.l.) by Jareeporn Pholmool. Although this forest is much drier than most in southern Thailand, we believe this species is supported through the dry season by the humid rivers and deep leaf litter found in its valleys.

Knowledge of the ecology of *L. peninsulare* is very limited, we know that it is fossorial, spending most of its time under leaf litter, and will erupt out of the substrate to chase down invertebrate prey. It is nocturnal, corresponding with our observations of other *Lygosoma* sp. in Thailand. These observations show a surprising diversity of macrohabitat utilisation, between primary rainforest and disturbed seasonal forest.

The presence of *L. peninsulare* in Thailand is unsurprising, considering the holotype was found < 10 km from the border (Fig. 3), within the same continuous forest: the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex. This discovery takes the number of *Lygosoma* species present in Thailand to seven, although taxonomy remains under regular revision (Freitas et al., 2019). This adds to the growing body of herpetofaunal species being discovered for the first time in Thailand along the Malaysian border (Pawangkhanant et al., 2021) and demonstrates the need for further surveys in the region. We suggest the Thai common name: จิ้งเหลนเรียวมลายู (Jing Lhen Riow Malayu).



**Figure 3.** Records of *Lygosoma peninsulare* from the Thai-Malay peninsula. Red dots – records presented in this study from Betong, Yala and Hat Yai, Songkhla, Thailand; Blue symbols – records from Grismer et al., (2018) including the blue cross that designates the holotype locality.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank David Frohlich for contributions to fieldwork, Even S.H. Quah for help in identification, Parinya Pawangkhanant for suggesting a Thai common name and Jareeporn Pholmool for sharing Figure 2 and their observations with us. We thank reviewer Lee Grismer for his comments on the manuscript.

### REFERENCES

Boulenger, G.A. (1900). Descriptions of new batrachians and reptiles from Larut Hills, Perak. *Annals of the Magazine of Natural History* 6: 186–193.

Freitas, E.S., Datta-Roy, A., Karanth, P., Grismer L.L. & Siler, C.D. (2019). Multilocus phylogeny and a new classification for African, Asian and Indian supple and writhing skinks (Scincidae: Lygosominae). *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* 186(4): 1067–1096.

Grismer, L.L., Quah, E.S., Duzulkafly, Z. & Yambun, P. (2018). On the taxonomy of *Lygosoma bampfyldi* Bartlett, 1895 (Squamata: Scincidae) with descriptions of new species from Borneo and Peninsular Malaysia and the resurrection of *Lygosoma schneideri* Werner, 1900. *Zootaxa* 4438(3): 528–550.

Pawangkhanant, P., Smits, T., Dugdale, I., Yimyoo, K., Nguyen, T.V., Suwannapoom, C. & Poyarkov, N.A. (2021). Photographic records of reptiles from Yala and Narathiwat provinces reveal seven new species for Thailand. *Russian Journal of Herpetology* 28(3): 152–162.

Accepted: 5 June 2023