

CTENOTUS RUBICUNDUS, A NEW SCINCID LIZARD
FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION

In a revision of the *Ctenotus* of the Kimberley and North-west Divisions (Storr 1975), I included in *C. helenae* four anomalous specimens from the Pilbara tableland. Since then I have examined two more specimens from that region and have become convinced that all six specimens belong to a new species. In this paper I describe that species and correct my description of *C. helenae*.

CTENOTUS RUBICUNDUS SP. NOV.

Holotype

R57257 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Messrs G. Harold and G. Barron on 13 July 1977 under a slab of rock at Mt Herbert, W.A., in 21°20'S, 117°12'E.

Diagnosis

A large stout *Ctenotus* completely without pattern, differing from *C. helenae* in its more numerous midbody scale rows (34-36, vs 26-32), contiguous nasals, slightly compressed toes with narrower calli, tubercular plantars, second supraocular not much wider than third and usually narrower than first (in *C. helenae* and *C. grandis* the second is much wider than third and usually wider than first).

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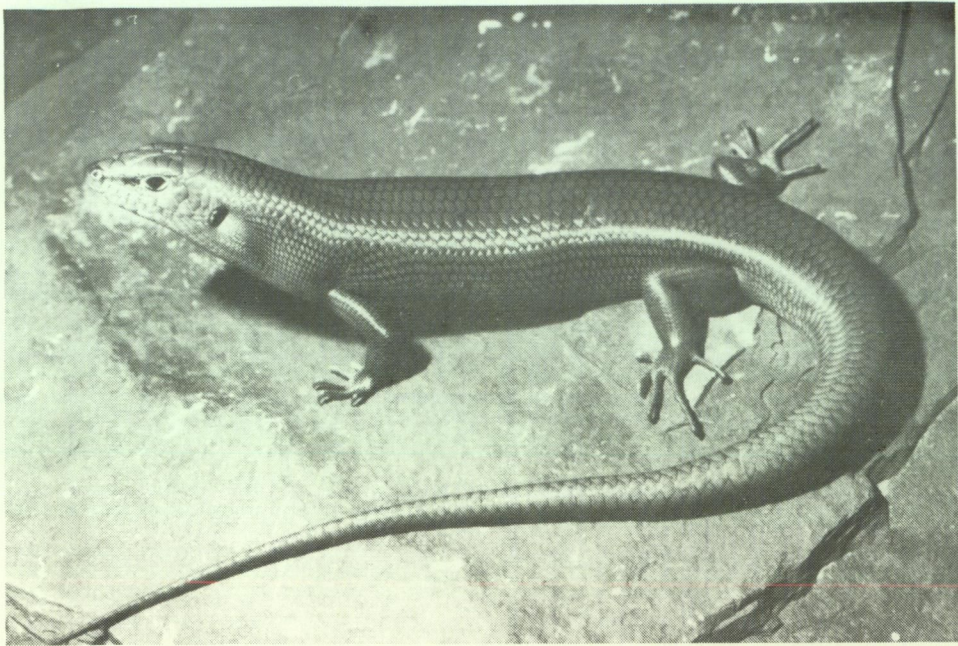


Plate 1: Holotype of *Ctenotus rubicundus*, photographed in life by G. Harold.

Distribution

Rocky hills in the interior of the Pilbara (northwestern Western Australia).

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 42-101 (N 6, mean 71.3). Length of appendages (% SVL): foreleg 25-30 (N 6, mean 27.3); hindleg 33-47 (N 6, mean 39.7), tail 141-208 (N 3, mean 179).

Nasals contiguous (contact usually short). Prefrontals in short to moderately long contact. Supraoculars 4, first three in contact with frontal. Supraciliaries 6 or 7 (N 6, mean 6.7), fourth to penultimate smaller than others. Palpebrals 11 or 12 (N 4, mean 11.3). Second loreal 1.7-2.1 (N 6, mean 1.87) times as wide as high, upper side flat (i.e. not gabled as in *C. grandis*). Presuboculars 2. Upper labials 8. Ear lobules 3-5 (N 6, mean 4.2); usually obtuse, occasionally subacute or truncate; second or third largest. Nuchals 3 (2 on one side of one specimen) (N 6). Midbody scale rows 34 or 36 (N 4, mean 34.5). Lamellae under fourth toe 19-22 (N 6, mean 20.3), calli moderately narrow (not much wider than in *leonhardii* group). Plantar scales subconical, each with a small round apical callus.

Head, back, sides and forelegs reddish (at least in adults), becoming brownish on snout and paler on face and sides. Tail and extreme posterior part of back olive brown. Hindlegs grey. Under surfaces white.

Remarks

Although this species has been confused with *C. helenae*, I do not consider their relationship especially close. Indeed, it is doubtful whether *C. rubicundus* is even a member of the *lesueurii* group, for its second supraocular is relatively small (as in the *leonhardii* group) and there is no marked disparity in size between the anterior and posterior supraciliaries.

In view of its great size, stout habit and high number of midbody scales, *C. rubicundus* could be related to *C. grandis* and more distantly to *C. pantherinus*. All three of these species share a superficial resemblance to members of the genus *Egernia*. In particular, *C. rubicundus* resembles *E. pilbarensis*, which is also endemic to rocky habitats in the Pilbara.

Paratypes

North-west Division (W.A.): Daniels Well (17252); Tambrey (20234-5); Cockeraga River (37706); Marble Bar (11340). All in the Western Australian Museum.

CTENOTUS HELENAE

Partial Re-description

Snout-vent length (mm): 42-95 (N 24, mean 73.2). Length of appendages (% SVL): foreleg 19-28 (N 24, mean 23.7), hindleg 34-48 (N 23, mean 40.4), tail 200-235 (N 7, mean 216).

Nasals usually separated, touching in one specimen (N 23). Prefrontals usually forming a median suture, just touching in one specimen (N 23). Supraciliaries 6-8 (N 23, mean 7.2), fourth to penultimate markedly smaller than others. Palpebrals 9-13 (N 22, mean 10.7). Nuchals 2 or 3 (N 23, mean 2.5). Midbody scale rows 26-32 (N 22, mean 29.4). Lamellae under fourth toe 17-25 (N 23, mean 21.7).

REFERENCE

STORR, G.M. (1975)—The genus *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia, Scincidae) in the Kimberley and North-west Divisions of Western Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 3: 209-243.