



A new, diminutive, upland *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger 1843 (Squamata: Scincidae) from the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex, Peninsular Malaysia

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Abstract

A new species of diminutive, upland, forest floor skink, *Sphenomorphus temengorensis* **sp. nov.** is described from the Belum-Temengor forest complex in northern Peninsular Malaysia. This species is differentiated from all other 36 Sundaland species of *Sphenomorphus* on the basis of a unique suite of morphological and color pattern characteristics. This is the first reptile known to be endemic to the Belum-Temengor forest complex and underscores the need for additional field research in this area that is actively being logged.

Key words: Belum-Temengor forest complex, Malaysia, new species, Scincidae, *Sphenomorphus*, *Sphenomorphus temengorensis*

Introduction

Sphenomorphus Fitzinger 1843 is a large, polyphyletic genus (Myers & Donnelly, 1991; Reeder, 2003) composed of a wide variety of adaptive types with at least 145 Asian and Pacific species (Brown & Alcalá, 1980; Greer, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1989; Grismer, 2006; Grismer, 2007a,b; Grismer *et al.*, 2009; Manthey & Grossman, 1997; Lim, 1998) and three Middle American species (Greer, 1974; Myers & Donnelly, 1991). In the Sunda Region of Southeast Asia, *Sphenomorphus* is represented by at least 36 species (De Rooij, 1915; Grismer, 2006a; Grismer, 2007a,b; Grismer *et al.*, 2009; Lim, 1998; Inger *et al.*, 2001; Iskandar, 1994; Malkmus *et al.*, 2002; Manthey & Grosman, 1997; Taylor, 1963), 17 of which occur in Peninsular Malaysia (Grismer *et al.*, 2009). The most recent additions to this genus in Peninsular Malaysia have all been small, brownish, nondescript, secretive, leaf-litter specialists bearing short limbs and elongate bodies with lifestyles leaving them poorly understood and seldom seen (Grismer, 2006, 2007a,b; Grismer *et al.*, 2009). The secretive nature and apparent low vagility of these species have presumably contributed to their isolation and endemism in upland forests (*S. bukitensis* Grismer 2007; *S. butleri* [Boulenger 1912]; *S. cameronicus* [Smith 1924]; *S. cophias* [Boulenger 1908]; *S. malayanus* [Doria 1888] and perhaps *S. sanctus* [Duméril & Bibron 1839]) or on islands (*S. ishaki* Grismer 2006; *S. langkawiensis* Grismer 2007; *S. perhentianensis* Grismer *et al.* 2009; and *S. sibuensis* Grismer 2006). Therefore, it is not unexpected to find additional endemics as underexplored mountainous areas (Grismer 2007a) and islands (Grismer 2007b; Grismer *et al.* 2009) are surveyed.

Grismer *et al.* (2006) reported on a single specimen of *Sphenomorphus* collected from the Temengor Forest Reserve, Perak (Fig. 1) which they tentatively identified as *Sphenomorphus* cf. *butleri* (LSUHC 5650) and later reidentified as *S. malayanus* (Grismer *et al.*, 2009) after having compared it with material of the