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A new species of *Dixonius* (Squamata: Gekkonidae) from Phu Quy Island, Vietnam

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Abstract

We describe a new species of *Dixonius* on the basis of five specimens from Phu Quy Island, Binh Thuan Province, in southern Vietnam. The new species can be distinguished from congeners based on molecular and morphological differences. Diagnostic features are: small size (SVL up to 44 mm); 7 or 8 supralabials; 11 or 12 rows of keeled tubercles on dorsum; 21–23 ventral scale rows; 5 or 6 precloacal pores in males; a canthal stripe running from rostrum through the eye and terminating behind the head; second pair of postmentals about one third to one half size of first pair; ground color of dorsum brown, with one or two rows of light yellow or orange spots in one or two rows along flanks, and irregular bands or a reticulated network of dark marks on dorsum. This is the fifth species of *Dixonius* known to occur in Vietnam.

Key words: *Dixonius tatoi* sp. nov., coastal forest, molecular phylogeny, taxonomy, Binh Thuan Province, southern Vietnam, South China Sea

Introduction

The distribution of the gekkonid genus *Dixonius* extends from Myanmar and Thailand to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (Bobrov 1992; Pauwels *et al.* 2000, 2003; Ota *et al.* 2001; Nguyen *et al.* 2006; Bourret 2009; Nguyen *et al.* 2009). Five species of *Dixonius* are currently recognized: *D. aaronbaueri* Ngo & Ziegler 2009, *D. hangseesom* Bauer, Sumontha, Grossmann, Pauwels & Vogel 2004, *D. melanostictus* (Taylor 1962), *D. siamensis* (Boulenger, 1898) and *D. vietnamensis* Das 2004 (Uetz and Hošek, 2014). Four of these are known to occur in Vietnam and *D. vietnamensis* as well as *D. aaronbaueri* were only described in the past decade (Das 2004; Ngo & Ziegler 2009). During surveys in southern Vietnam in 2013 an island gecko population was discovered, that showed the typical features characteristic for the genus *Dixonius*: single pair of enlarged terminal scansors, tuberculate and keeled dorsal scalation, a rostral scale with a median cleft, first supralabials in contact with the nostril, enlarged chinshields and lateral gulars, precloacal pores present, a median row of transversely enlarged caudal scales, the absence of terminal scansorial pad on tail, the presence of cloacal spurs, the reduction in length of the second phalanx of digit IV of the manus, and the proximally bifurcate hypoischium (Bauer *et al.* 1997). However, this *Dixonius* population was neither morphologically nor genetically assignable to any known species and thus is here described as new.