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THE TAXONOMIC STATUS OF *HEMIDACTYLUS VANDERMEERMÖHRI* (REPTILIA: SAURIA: GEKKONIDAE)

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ABSTRACT

Hemidactylus vandermeermohri Brongersma, 1928, known only from the type material (two specimens) from Pulu Berhala, Indonesia, is shown to be conspecific with *H. frenatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1836.

In 1928 Brongersma described *Hemidactylus vandermeermohri* (spelled *H. vandermeer-mohri* by him) on the basis of two specimens from Pulu Berhala (= Pulau Berhala), an islet off the northeastern coast of Sumatra. Brongersma's description of the new species was published twice during 1928; viz., in *Miscellanea Zoologica Sumatrana*, issued January (Brongersma, 1928a), and in the *Zoologischer Anzeiger* (Leipzig), issued March (Brongersma, 1928b). The former of these two descriptions must be regarded as the original description. The description in the *Zoologischer Anzeiger*, however, is slightly more explicit. The latter publication is listed incorrectly by Wermuth (1965) as being the original description.

On the basis of Brongersma's description *H. vandermeermohri* can be distinguished from the other Indo-Australian species of the genus *Hemidactylus* as follows: from *H. brookii* Gray, 1845, and *H. frenatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1836, by ha-

ving a tail which is devoid of tubercles, except a few scattered ones at the base; from *H. garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836, by having a rounded tail without serrated edges; and from *H. nigriventris* Van Lidth de Jeude, 1905, by having the first supralabial bordering the nostril. De Rooij (1915) lists yet another species, *H. karenorum* (Theobald, 1868), as occurring in the Indo-Australian archipelago. Subsequent examination by various authors of the specimen upon which this statement was based has conclusively shown that *H. karenorum* does not occur in the Indo-Australian archipelago.

In the course of an analysis of the genus *Hemidactylus* currently being carried out at the Zoological Museum Amsterdam I examined the holotype and paratype of *H. vandermeermohri*, the only extant specimens of the species to this day. During this examination I got the distinct impression that the respective tails of the specimens were regenerated ones. In order to

become certain of this I had the specimens X-rayed. The X-ray photographs clearly show that both specimens are in possession of a tail which is largely regenerated (Fig. 1). Thus, it appears that Brongersma incorrectly described the tails as being original ones.

If the regenerated parts of the tails are no longer taken into consideration the two specimens appear to be representatives of *H. frenatus*. I therefore compared the specimens with the syntypes of the latter species and with a series of twenty five specimens of *H. frenatus* from various, mainly Indo-Australian, localities:

Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris:

Indonesia: Java: 5135 (2 specimens, syntypes of *H. frenatus*).

Zoölogisch Museum, Amsterdam:

Indonesia: Bali, Obud: 15593; East-Flores, Himandiri: 15647 (2 specimens); Krakatoa:

15654; Lombok, Lowetoki: 15647 (2 specimens); New Guinea, Manokwari: 15648; Noord-Wachter: 15649; Pulu Berhala: 10939 (holotype of *H. vandermeermohri*), 10940 (paratype of *H. vandermeermohri*); Simalur, Sinabang: 15652 (2 specimens); Sumatra, Deli: 15578, 15643; Sumatra, Gunung Leuser Reserve: 15589; Sumatra, Medan: 15642; Sumatra, Polonia: 15644, 15645; West-Nias: 15641 (2 specimens); West-Sumba: 14756.

Philippines: Tablas: 15651 (2 specimens).

Solomon Islands: Guadalcanal, Homara: 11766 (2 specimens).

Exact provenance unknown: on board ship "Si-boga": 15650; Pajeti: 15654.

A close comparison between the two specimens of *H. vandermeermohri* and the series of twenty seven specimens of *H. frenatus* (Table I) did not yield a single conclusive difference. I therefore regard *Hemidactylus vandermeermohri* Brongersma, 1928, as a junior synonym of *H. frenatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1836.

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Fig. 1. X-ray photographs of the type material of *Hemidactylus vandermeermohri*. Left, paratype; right, holotype. In both specimens the greater part of the tail consists of an undifferentiated, unsegmented rod whereas the base of the tail contains fully developed vertebrae. This clearly demonstrates that both tails are largely regenerated.

Table I. Comparison of characters of *Hemidactylus vandermeermohri* and *H. frenatus*.

Character	<i>H. vandermeermohri</i> n = 2	<i>H. frenatus</i> , syn- types n = 2	<i>H. frenatus</i> n = 25
dorsolateral tubercles	+	+	+
nontubercular dorsolateral scales	juxtaposed	juxtaposed- subimbricate	juxtaposed- subimbricate
keels on tubercles	-	-	-
keels on dorsolateral scales	-	-	-
ventral body scales	imbricate	imbricate- subimbricate	imbricate- subimbricate
number of preanal pores	27, 32	0 (females)	28-34
number of interpreanal pore scales	0	does not apply	0-2
lateral body fold	absent, weakly developed	absent, weakly developed	absent, weakly developed
dermal folds on limbs	-	-	-
tubercles on tail base	+	+	+
dorsal lepidosis of regenerated tail	imbricate scales	imbricate scales	imbricate scales
ventral lepidosis of regenerated tail	transversely dilated plates	transversely dilated plates	transversely dilated plates
median rostral cleft	+	+	+
number of supralabials	10-12	12-13	9-13
number of infralabials	8-9	9, 10	8-11
1st supralabial separated from nostril	-	-	-, +
number of nasals	3	3	3
comparative size of digits I	small	small	small-very small
number of divided scansors on 4th toe	7, 8	6, 8	5-9
number of pairs of chinshields	2	2	2-3

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