



# Article

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## On the identity of the type species of *Sphenomorphus* (Squamata: Scincidae): *Lygosoma melanopogon* Duméril and Bibron 1839, with a note on a new scalation character of the pes in *Sphenomorphus*

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### Abstract

The type series of *Lygosoma melanopogon* Duméril and Bibron 1839, the type species of the scincid lizard genus *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger 1843, consists of four specimens representing three species, all of which have available junior synonyms. A lectotype is designated, and *Lygosoma melanopogon* becomes a senior synonym of *Lygosoma florense* Weber 1891 (= *Sphenomorphus florensis*) and that species is redefined based on specimens from throughout its distribution for the first time. Based on a lack of consistent differences in morphology and coloration, previously named subspecies of *Sphenomorphus florensis* are placed in synonymy, leaving a single wide-ranging species *S. melanopogon*. *Lygosoma Kühnei* Roux 1910 is also placed in the synonymy of *S. melanopogon*, and the nomenclatural status of the name *Scincus naevius* Duméril and Bibron 1839 resolved. *Lygosoma Meyeri* Doria 1874 is raised from synonymy to become the name for the New Guinean *Sphenomorphus* species to which the name *S. melanopogon* has sometimes previously been applied, and *Hinulia papuensis* Macleay 1877 synonymised with it. *Sphenomorphus melanopogon* is identified as a member of a group of *Sphenomorphus* species which show an extension of the imbricate dorsal scalation onto the solar surface of the pes.

**Key words:** *Sphenomorphus*, Indonesia, New Guinea, taxonomy, nomenclature, foot morphology

### Introduction

As currently understood, the genus *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger 1843 is a large and diverse polyphyletic assemblage of lygosomine skinks centered over Australasia. In encompassing many species and several poorly understood lineages, the genus is the current conceptual heir to the genus *Lygosoma* of the Boulengerian era. Resolution of these lineages is an area of current research (Greer 1979, 1983, 1991, 1997; Böhme 1981; Ferner *et al.* 1997; Mecke *et al.* 2009; Reeder & Reichert 2011; Linkem *et al.* 2011) and is approaching the point where the identity of the type species of the genus *Sphenomorphus* is important. The purpose of this paper is to solve this problem, to discuss some of the taxonomic consequences that follow from it, and to note the existence of a character of the pes that characterises this species and several other species of *Sphenomorphus*.

### Materials and methods

Specimens, including all primary type material, were examined from the following collections: American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH), Australian Museum, Sydney (AM), Natural History Museum, London (BMNH), Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu (BPBM), Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge (MCZ), Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (MNHN), Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Genoa (MSNG), Naturhistorisches Museum, Basel (NMBA), Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna (NHMW), Papua New Guinea National Museum, Port Moresby (PNGNM), Naturalis, Nationaal Natuurhistorisches Museum, Leiden (RMNH.RENA), South Australian Museum (SAM),