

## ***Gekko lauhachindai* sp. nov., a new cave-dwelling gecko (Reptilia: Gekkonidae) from central Thailand**

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### **Abstract**

A new species, *Gekko lauhachindai* sp. nov. is described from Saraburi Province in central Thailand. It is a member of the mid-sized *Gekko petricolus* group and within this group it is probably most closely related to *G. grossmanni* Günther, 1994, *G. scientiadventura* Rösler et al., 2005, *G. russelltraini* Ngo et al., 2009, and *G. takouensis* Ngo & Gamble, 2010 with which it shares a similar dorsal pattern. The new species is distinguished from its congeners by its moderate size (SVL at least to 98 mm) and slender body, rostral participation in the nostril border, precloacal pores 12–14, femoral pores absent, dorsal tubercle rows 14, snout less than 1.5 times eye diameter, presence of “I” shaped rostral groove, interorbital scale rows 36–40, digit I and IV of pes with 13 and 13–15 enlarged subdigital scanners, respectively, and dorsal pattern of large bright spots dorsally that may be expanded to 5–6 whitish narrow cross bars intersected by a bright mid-dorsal dotted line from nape to sacrum. The new species is one of many recently described Southeast Asian geckos that appear to be restricted to limestone caves. It is the seventh species of *Gekko* known from Thailand and the third *Gekko* occurring in sympatry in the karst forests of Chalermphrakiat District, Saraburi Province, central Thailand.

**Key words:** *Gekko lauhachindai*, Gekkonidae, Thailand, description, *Gekko petricolus*, limestone

### **Introduction**

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of gekkotan species from Thailand; nine new *Cnemaspis* Strauch, seven new *Cyrtodactylus* Gray, a new *Dixonius* Bauer, Good & Branch and a new *Gekko* Laurenti have been described. Sixteen of the 18 new species described since 2000 are endemic to Thailand (Bauer et al. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2010; Pauwels et al. 2004; Grismer & Ahmad 2008; Grismer et al. 2008a, 2008b; Sumontha et al. 2010). The majority of these newly described geckos have limited distributions occurring in isolated, rocky terrain such as karst outcrops and limestone caves (see Sumontha et al. 2010).

At least 17 species of *Gekko* have been reported to occur in Indochina (e.g., Taylor 1963; Grossmann & Ulber 1990; Rösler et al. 2005; Bauer et al. 2008; Ngo et al. 2009; Rösler et al. 2010; Ngo & Gamble 2010; Nguyen 2010). However, Nguyen et al. (2010) showed *G. ulikovskii* Darevsky & Orlov to be a junior synonym of *Gekko badenii* Szczerbak & Nekrasova, thus currently 16 species are currently recognized. In Thailand, Nabhitabhata et al. (“2000” 2004) recognized five species of *Gekko*, *G. gecko* Linnaeus, *G. siamensis* Grossmann & Ulber, *G. monarchus* (Schlegel), *G. smithii* Gray, and *G. petricolus* Taylor. Recently, Bauer et al. (2008) described *G. nutaphandi* from western Thailand which brings the total number to six. We