

## LIPINIA NITENS (PETERS, 1871): DISCOVERY OF A SECOND SPECIMEN AND A REDESCRIPTION OF THE HOLOTYPE

**Indraneil Das**

*Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,  
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia  
E-mail: idas@ibec.unimas.my*

**Allen E. Greer**

*The Australian Museum, 6 College St, Sydney, NSW 2010, Australia  
E-mail: alleng@austmus.gov.au*

**ABSTRACT.** – The rare Bornean skink, *Lygosoma nitens* Peters (1871), previously known only from the holotype of unknown provenance in Sarawak, is reviewed on the basis of the type and a new specimen from Gunung Pueh, western Sarawak. The species is redescribed and allocated to the genus *Lipinia*. *Lipinia nitens* lacks an external ear opening, having in its place a scaly dimple; only six supralabials, with the fourth subocular; longitudinal scale rows at midbody 22; a distinct colour pattern, with dark paravertebral and lateral stripes, especially on the anterior of the trunk.

**KEY WORDS.** – *Lygosoma nitens*, *Lipinia nitens*, systematics, Sarawak, Gunung Pueh.

### INTRODUCTION

*Lygosoma nitens* Peters (1871) was described from a single specimen collected by the late Nineteenth Century Italian botanist and explorer, Odoardo Beccari (1843-1920) and nobleman and patron of Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Genoa, the Marquis Giacomo Doria of Genoa (1840-1913), between 1865-1868, from an unspecified locality in Sarawak. Subsequently, both Bartlett (1895) and Brown (1902) listed the species, although it is unclear whether they actually examined specimens. There have been few literature citations of this species, and indeed, in the next major work on the lizard fauna of south-east Asia by De Rooij (1915), this name is unlisted. More recently, *Lygosoma nitens* Peters, 1871 has been treated as a valid species of *Scincella* Mittleman, 1950, by Mittleman (1952) and of *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger, 1843, by Bauer et al. (1995: 64).

On 5 September 1999, one of us (ID) found a road killed skink (ZRC 2.4861) at the base of Gunung Pueh (Mount Poi in the older literature; summit at 01° 48'N; 109° 40'E), Kuching Division, western Sarawak, East Malaysia (Borneo), that was thought to be this species. In pursuing the identification of the specimen, one of us (AG) borrowed the type specimen from the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Genoa (CE 27975) for examination in a modern context. In this brief note, we provide a redescription of the type specimen, allocate it to the genus *Lipinia* Gray, 1845, and compare it with the recently discovered specimen.

### GENERIC ALLOCATION OF *LYGOSOMA NITENS* PETERS, 1871

*Lygosoma nitens* Peters 1871 is most appropriately assigned to the genus *Lipinia* under current taxonomic concepts. *Lipinia* is a member of the *Sphenomorphus* group of lygosomine skinks (Greer, 1979) and has the following derived characters vis à vis this group: size small (maximum SVL: 58 mm); lower eyelid with clear window (except in *L. leptosoma*); auricular lobules absent; body scales smooth; longitudinal scales rows at midbody  $\leq 28$ ; basal subdigital lamellae expanded (albeit ever so slightly in some taxa); postorbital absent; vomers fused; pterygoid teeth absent; dorsal colour pattern usually comprising a pale (rarely dark) mid-dorsal stripe at least anteriorly; visceral fat bodies absent (except in *L. noctua*); brood size constant, two or one (*L. rouxi*). The genus currently contains 27 species and is distributed from south-east Asia and the Philippines east through the Indonesian Archipelago, Solomon Islands islands of the central Pacific (for the distribution in the Pacific, see Zweifel, 1979: Fig. 8).

### REDESCRIPTION OF *LIPINIA NITENS* (PETERS, 1871)

In general aspect, *Lipinia nitens* is a relatively small (SVL: 29 mm fide Peters, 1871), gracile skink with well developed pentadactyl limbs and a colour pattern consisting of a pair