

**RESOLUTION OF THE SYSTEMATIC STATUS OF *EUBLEPHARIS  
MACULARIUS FUSCUS* BÖRNER, 1981 (EUBLEPHARIDAE:  
SAURIA: SQUAMATA)**

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(with three text figures)

**ABSTRACT.-** The disjunct population of leopard geckos, genus *Eublepharis* from western India (Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka) is shown to be non conspecific with *E. macularius*. Originally described as a subspecies of *E. macularius* by Börner (1981), *E. fuscus* is demonstrated to be both diagnosable and allopatric with congeners, and therefore elevated to species status and a neotype designated. *Eublepharis fuscus* differs from known congeners in possessing the following combination of characters: six postnasals contacting nasals; eight supralabials to a point below pupil; mental small, hexagonal, longer than wide and about twice as long as the first pair of postmentals; prefrontal region with smooth, flat scales; large granular and non-spinose tubercles on the dorsum; tubercles smaller than intertubercular regions; 42 mid-body scale rows across belly to below lateral row of tubercles; 10-11 preanal pores; femoral pores absent; subdigital scansors entire, smooth; toe IV exceeding toe III in length, a single broad pale dorsal band between the nuchal loop and caudal constriction and maximum SVL recorded: 252.0 mm.

**KEY WORDS.-** Sauria, Eublepharidae, neotype designation, *Eublepharis fuscus*, *Eublepharis macularius*, India.

INTRODUCTION

The western Indian leopard gecko, *Eublepharis macularius*, was known to have a disjunct distribution (Grismer, 1988: Fig. 44), the range of the species encompassing western India, including the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and after a discontinuity of circa 400 km, north to Pakistan, the plains of northern India, southern and eastern Afghanistan. In his account of the material in the collection of the BMNH, Boulenger (1885) gave the distribution of the species as "north-western India, probably ranging through Baluchistan and Persia to the Euphrates", and did not fail to notice that an example from "Kandesh" (= Khandesh, in Maharashtra State, India) had two broad dorsal bands (the midbody band and the band at caudal constriction), similar to the pattern known in *Eublepharis hardwickii*, while at the same time showing the variegations of the double-banded *E. macularius*.

An examination of material collected from several localities in south-western India and a

comparison with forms taken from the localities in the northern parts of the range, indicate subtle but consistent differences in morphological features of the two groups of eublepharid geckos hitherto referred to as *Eublepharis macularius*. Since Blyth's (1854) type of the taxon came from "Salt Range, Punjab" (now in Pakistan) in the north, the western population is not conspecific. A name published in a privately published journal (*Saurologica*), but available in the sense of Article 13 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, Third Edition (Ride *et al.* 1985), is shown to be available for the population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following measurements were taken with dial vernier caliper (to the nearest 0.1 mm): snout-vent length (SVL; from the tip of the snout to the anus), tail length (TL; from the anus to the tip of the tail), head length (HL; the distance between the angle of the jaws and the snout-tip),