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Abstract

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Biogeography of the Lizards of Borneo

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Borneo covers an area of 575 000 km² and is geologically a part of Sundaland. At present, 106 species of lizards (in 35 genera from nine families) are known from Borneo, and in the last decade alone, 10 new species have been added to the fauna. As many as 57 species among these are endemic, and among endemic genera are *Apterygodon* (Scincidae), *Complicitus* and *Hypsicalotes* (Agamidae) and *Lanthonotus* (Lanthonotidae- an endemic family). Non-endemics, other than widespread species, co-occur on adjacent islands and/or the Malay Peninsula, reflecting past history of land connections. Two non-Sundaic genera have relatives in Indo-China, while being absent from the Malay Peninsula. The dispersal from the Malay Peninsula to Borneo was facilitated by the low waters of the Late Pleistocene glacials, when sea levels dropped by as much as 120 m below present levels.

The distribution of the saurofauna appears related not only to availability of habitat types, but also barriers, including major rivers and mountain ranges, and the distribution of several lineages are suspected to be the result of one or more vicarious events in the Quaternary. The Kapuas forms a major boundary on the west, the Barito to the south, and the Mahakam in the south-east. Mountain ranges that form barriers to the distribution of animals and plants, and therefore are boundaries of recognisable biogeographic units. Most of Borneo's endemic biota are restricted to high elevations, especially Mount Kinabalu. However, in the case of the much better known amphibian fauna, intensive sampling and comparisons of the fauna have resulted in significant extension of range of many species, sometimes along non-contiguous mountain ranges, suggesting ancient, wider distributions.

Keywords lizards; biogeography; borneo