

Rediscovery of *Mictopholis austeniana* (Annandale, 1908) (Squamata: Agamidae)

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Abstract: The poorly-known agamid lizard, *Mictopholis austeniana*, hitherto known from the unique holotype collected nearly a century ago from “Hills near Harmatti” (in Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India), is reported from two sites in Arunachal Pradesh. The colouration of a live specimen is described and the species illustrated in colour for the first time.

Key words: Agamidae; Arunachal Pradesh; India; *Mictopholis austeniana*; Rediscovery

The monotypic genus *Mictopholis* was established by Smith (1935) for *Salea austeniana* Annandale, 1908, the etymology derived from the Greek, meaning ‘mixed scales’, an allusion to the scattered enlarged scales on body. The species was named for Lieutenant Colonel Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen (1834–1923), of the Indian Survey Department, a speleologist who surveyed the remote Assam region of British India, Burma, Iran and Ethiopia, collecting reptiles and molluscan specimens for the Indian Museum as well as geological specimens for the British Museum of Natural History (see Palmer [1924] and Smith [1931:10], for biographies). Apart from the holotype (Zoological Survey of India [ZSI] 3976: Das et al., 1998), collected

from “Hills near Harmatti” (at present encompassed within the city of Itanagar [27°02'N; 93°38'E], Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India), no specimen has been collected. There are no citations of this taxon in the literature, except for the unpublished thesis of Moody (1980) and several checklists (Wermuth, 1967; Welch et al., 1990; Zhao and Adler, 1993; Welch, 1994; Das, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003; Manthey and Schuster, 1996; Barts and Wilms, 1997).

We report here two additional specimens of *Mictopholis austeniana* (Annandale, 1908), both collected from Arunachal Pradesh, West Kameng District Northeast India: ZSI 24841 from Bomdila (27°15'N; 92°24'E), and Museum of Arya Vidyapeeth College, Guwahati [MAVC] L31 (ex-ADL 001) from Sangti Valley (27°26'48"N; 92°04'60"E; 1,650 m asl), Dirang (Fig. 1). This is the first record of the species almost a century after the original description of Annandale (1908). Moreover, live colouration of the species is described for the first time on the basis of one of the two specimens (Figs. 2–3).

Harmati (the type locality) falls within the Dafla Hills, located east of the Kameng River, whereas Bomdila and Dirang, though located in the same range, are not part of these hills, which essentially comprise the foothill of the eastern Himalayas (see geological map in Yin et al., 2006). These hills cover three protected

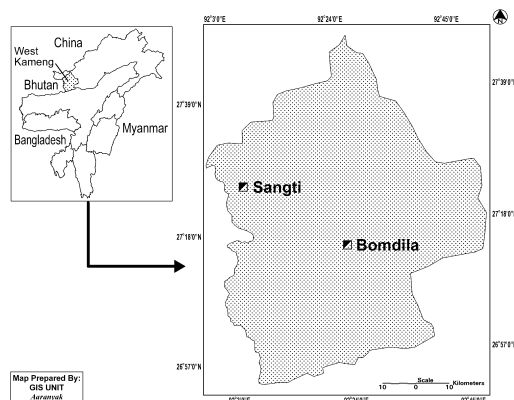


FIG. 1. Map of Northeast India (inset on left), showing West Kameng District and the two localities of *Mictopholis austeniana* (Annandale, 1908).

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