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Abstract

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New and Rediscovered Geckos from Peninsular India: Implications for Biogeography

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The gecko fauna of India has been largely neglected since the publication of Smith's Fauna of British India in 1935. Despite many investigations in biodiversity hotspots such as the Western Ghats of peninsular India, new species of geckos have gone undiscovered and many species described in the 19th Century have rarely been seen again. Recent field work in the Eastern and Western Ghats, as well as the Shevaroy Hills, has revealed the existence of several new species of *Cnemaspis*. In addition, two species described by Beddome in 1870 and only rarely noted subsequently have been found to be abundant. *Hemiphyllodactylus aurantiacus* remains a common house gecko at its type locality of Yercaud. The golden gecko, *Calodactylodes aureus*, occurs at apparently high density in and around the city of Vellore in the Eastern Ghats. It is highly vocal and rather conspicuous where it occurs. Perceived distributional gaps of geckos in India may be artifactual and emphasize that peninsular India supports endemic elements of both putatively Gondwanan origin and more recent derivation.

Keywords new and rediscovered geckos; peninsular india; biogeography