

A NEW SPECIES OF LIZARD FROM THE RIUKIU
ARCHIPELAGO, JAPAN

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Among a large number of reptiles from Japan and the adjacent islands recently acquired by the United States National Museum from Mr. Alan Owston, there is a surprisingly distinct species belonging to the lacertine genus *Takydromus*, surprisingly distinct because the arrangement of the dorsal scales is entirely different from what is the universal rule in all the other species of the genus. There are about eight species known, and in all of these the dorsals are greatly enlarged and disposed in parallel longitudinal rows. In the new species the dorsals are small, not abruptly differentiated from the laterals and not disposed in longitudinal rows. With this character there are associated several others of great distinctness and importance.

TAKYDROMUS DORSALIS new species

Diagnosis.—Four pairs of submental shields; two inguinal pores on each side; dorsal scales small, not arranged in longitudinal series, gradually merging into the laterals which are rather large, not granular; six series of large ventrals, the outer series narrower than the others, median series very slightly keeled, if at all; posterior enlarged throat scales pointed; superciliaries separated from supraoculars by a series of granules; tail three times as long as head and body, or more; a light stripe from nostril to ear, but none on body.

Habitat.—Ishigaki shima, Yayeyama group, Riukiu archipelago, Japan.

Type.—United States National Museum No. 34,162; Ishigaki shima, Yayeyama group; April–June, 1899.

Variation.—In the ten specimens belonging to the National Museum but very little individual variation is observed. All have two inguinal pores on each side, except No. 34,163 which has three; all have four pairs of submentals; and all have the nasals in contact behind the rostral.

Remarks.—This exceedingly distinct species does not show any near affinity to any of the known species of the genus. It is absolutely unique in the arrangement and size of the dorsal scales.

Another unexpected character in so southern a species is the number of submental shields. Four submentals are found normally only in the northern forms such as *T. tachydromoides* and its allies.

The discovery of this novelty in the southern group of the Riukiu archipelago is the more startling, since we have *T. smaragdinus* from Miyako shima in the same group, a species which conforms in all respects to the general typus of the genus. On the other hand, the fact that we have ten specimens of the present species from Ishigaki shima and none of the regular type seems to indicate that the latter may not occur in that island at all.