

A NEW SPECIES OF PACHYDACTYLUS

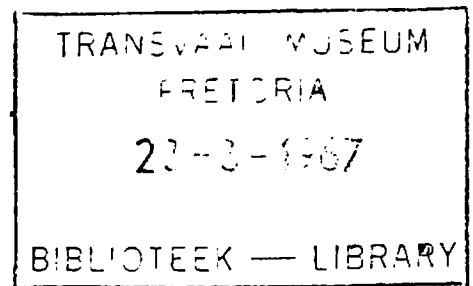
(Pachydactylus oreophilus sp. nov.)

FROM SESFONTEIN, SOUTH WEST AFRICA

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the 1965 Port Elizabeth Museum collecting expedition to South West Africa, the writers visited Sesfontein where a hitherto undescribed species of *Pachydactylus* was encountered. Three specimens were collected.

II. *PACHYDACTYLUS OREOPHILUS* sp. nov.

Types

Holotype ♀ No. P. E. M. 1503/67 from 20 miles west of Sesfontein. Collected 17. 10. 1965.

Allotype ♂ No. P. E. M. 1503/69 from 20 miles west of Sesfontein. Collected 17. 10. 1965.

Paratype ♀ No. P. E. M. 1503/68 from 5 miles west of Sesfontein. Collected 16. 10. 1965.

Diagnosis

This species does not appear to be closely related to any described species of *Pachydactylus*. It is exceeded in size only by *P. namaquensis*, *bibronii* and *laevigatus*. With its high labial and scansor counts it is also near these species but the character of the dorsal scaling is altogether different, consisting of small granules intermixed with larger elongated feebly keeled tubercles. The head is only feebly depressed and quite unlikely the heavy triangular head of the other large species. Numbers 1503/67 and 69 are considered to be adults and No. 1503/68 to be a sub-adult.

Description

Holotype : ♀ No. P. E. M. 1503/67 from 20 miles west of Sesfontein; collected 17. 10. 1965.

Head much longer than broad. Snout obtusely pointed. Canthus rostralis prominent and rounded; cheek region (except for a ridge from anterior edge of eyebrow to the 3rd. and 4th. upper labial) concave, making the upper labials very prominent. Scales on back of head smaller than those on snout which are rounded. Feebly enlarged tubercles on occiput. Nostril raised, pointing outwards and slightly upwards, pierced between three nasals, the first upper labial and rostrum. The anterior nasal is the largest and is separated from its fellow by a single large rounded granule. Upper labials 11 and 12. Lower labials 9 and 9. (Some difficulty was experienced in counting the upper labials. For example on the left side there are 11 clear labials, then three small scales and another large scale. This was taken as a count of 11 labials although the last scale was quite as large as some of the posterior labials. (See Fig. 1.) Mental about three times as long as broad, narrowing slightly posteriorly. Ear opening small, oval to rounded.

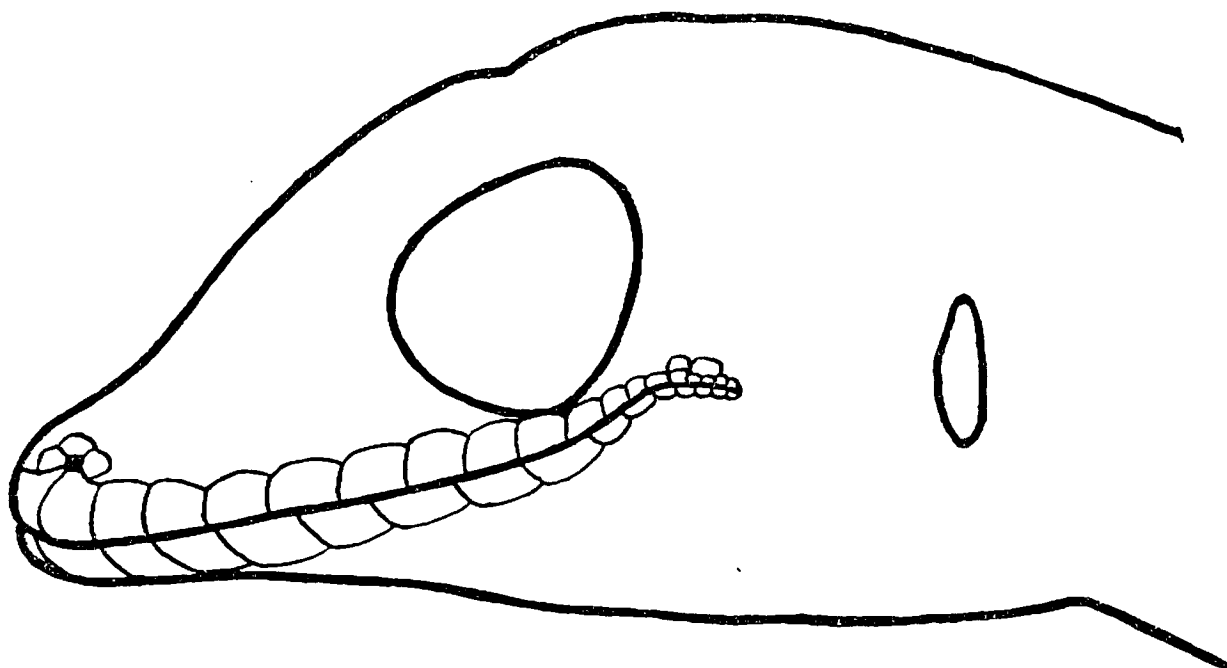


Figure 1: Scales on upper and lower labials. Left side.

Gulars minute, rounded, granular. Ventrals much larger, imbricate, smooth and more or less rounded.

Dorsal tubercles large, rather feebly keeled, in 16 irregular longitudinal rows; intermixed with smaller heterogeneous rounded to oval granules of varying sizes becoming larger dorsolaterally.

Hind limbs covered with large, imbricate, smooth scales intermixed with keeled tubercles. No tubercles on forelimbs.

Tail segmented with 6 transverse rows of large keeled scales per segment. Median row of subcaudals enlarged. Tail very slightly longer than head and body. A row of three enlarged scales posterolateral to the vent just behind hind limbs. Inferomedian row of subdigital scales, from the base of toe to first scansor, enlarged transversely. Six scansors under fingers except the fourth which has 7; 6 scansors under first toe and 7 under all others.

Length of head and body: 57.2 mm.; tail 61.2 mm.

Colour: Head pale pinkish brown dusted with greyish, paler posteriorly. A narrow horseshoe-shaped brown line from behind eye round occiput and a similar line from ear-hole over base of neck. The broad interspace whitish. Two similar lines across body at base of hind limbs, the anterior band entire, the posterior broken; interspace broad, whitish with a few brownish vermiculations. Body dorsally, pale pinkish brown with large dark vermiculations arranged more or less in two longitudinal lines on either side of the vertebral line which is pale.



Figure 2: *Pachydactylus orcophilus* sp. nov.

Sides of body dusted with small flecks of brownish. Underparts white; tail whitish with a row of indistinct brownish spots dorsolaterally. Front limbs freckled with brown; hind limbs with brownish vermiculations.

Allotype: ♂ No. P. E. M. 1503/69 from 20 miles west of Sesfontein. Collected on 17. 10. 1965.

As for holotype except that the upper labials number 13 and 12 and the lower labials 10 on both sides. Dorsal tubercles in 18 irregular rows. The enlarged scales posterolateral to the vent are in two rows of three, the upper row being larger and more prominent.

Length of head and body: 53.6 mm.; tail 56.7 mm.

Colour: Similar to holotype but darker markings on dorsal surface more distinct. Head more heavily dusted with greyish (See Fig. 2).

Paratype: ♀ No. P. E. M. 1503/68 from 5 miles west of Sesfontein. Collected on 16. 10. 1965.

As for holotype but upper labials 11 and 11. Keeled dorsal tubercles in 18 irregular rows. Six scansors under all fingers except the first of one hand which has only 5. The second finger missing from the other hand.

Length of head and body: 42.4 mm.; tail 46.6 mm.

Colour: Similar to holotype but markings finer and more distinct; less greyish dusting on head.

Table 1. Scale and scansor counts.

	1503/67	1503/69	1503/68
Nostril between	3 L R	3 L R	3 L R
Granules between nasals	1	1	1
Upper labials	11 12	13 12	11 11
Lower labials	9 9	10 10	9 9
Scansors under fingers	6 (7 under 4th)	6 (7 under 4th)	6 (5 under 1st)
toe (1)	6 6	6 6	6 6
(2)	7 7	7 7	6 6
(3)	7 7	7 7	7 7
(4)	7 7	7 7	7 7
(5)	7 7	7 7	7 7
Number of rows of keeled tubercles	16	18	18

Table 2. Table of measurements.

	1503/67	1503/69	1503/68
Head (tip of snout to post. border of ear)	16.3 mm.	15.7 mm.	12.7 mm.
Breadth of head (across temps.)	12.2	11.0	10.0
Snout (from ant. edge eye)	6.5	6.7	5.8
Diameter of eye	4.0	4.2	3.7
Distance between eye and ant. edge of ear	6.0	5.5	4.7
Head and Body	57.2	53.6	42.4
Tail	61.2	56.7	46.6

Habits

The first specimen of this interesting species was found on the ground under a loose stone at the foot of a high over-hanging rock-shelter. This led to intensive search on open hillsides covered with loose flakes, but no further specimens were encountered. On similar slopes at night no more were seen until, returning disconsolately to camp, the writers disturbed one near another high cliff. Although this specimen was not caught as it rapidly climbed 25 feet or more up the cliff and disappeared, this at once suggested that steep cliffs are the normal habitat of this species, and next morning two more were captured on the vertical rock-face under large exfoliated surfaces. With its thin hindlimbs, this species moves smoothly and rapidly over the cliff-faces, in marked contrast to the waddling gait of *Pachydactylus bibronii* which was found to inhabit the same krantzes.

[Dr. W. Steyn has kindly drawn our attention to a specimen (C. R. 3638) in the State Museum Windhoek, collected by H. Roth on the highest point, Königstein, of the Brandberg on 20. 4. 1965. This specimen is undoubtedly *oreophilus*. However, the dorsal tubercles in this specimen are much larger and far more numerous than in the Sesfontein material; should this character prove to be constant, when more material is available from the Brandberg, this form may well warrant sub-specific recognition.]

III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Mr. B. de la Bat of the Department of Nature Conservation and also to the Commissioner of Bantu Affairs for permission to visit the Kaokoveld and collect reptiles. Also to Dr. W. Steyn, Director of the State Museum Windhoek, for help at all times. To the Board of Trustees of the Port Elizabeth Museum for permission to undertake the expedition and to Drs. J. Winterbottom and W. Steyn for allowing us to join the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute—Windhoek State Museum Joint Expedition.