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# HERPETOLOGICAL NOTES No. 5.

BY J. R. KINGHORN.

(Plate xiv; two Text-figures.)

## 1. TAXONOMIC CHANGES IN THE GENUS RHYNCHOELAPS.

Recent investigation shows that *Rhynchoelaps bertholdi* belongs to an entirely different genus of snakes from other species generally placed in the same genus.

*R. bertholdi* has what may be described as typical elapine type head scalation, whilst other members of the group have a shovel-shaped snout, with a more or less oblique arrangement of head shields, naturally conforming to the disposition of the bones of the skull.

Only one member of the shovel-snouted group has a more or less normal type arrangement of shields, but it is quite distinct from *bertholdi*. This species is *fasciolata*, originally named *Rhinelaps fasciolatus* Gunther, but in this the nasal is widely separated from the preocular:

Jan, in *Rev. et Mag. Zool.*, p. 518, Dec. 1858, first mentioned *E. bertholdi* with *Rhynchoelaps* proposed as a subgenus, but there was no description. In the same magazine, 1859, 2, ii, p. 123 he uses the name *Simoselaps*, genotype *E. bertholdi* and gave a fairly full description; so it would appear that *Simoselaps* should be used; but because of common usage I propose at present to refer it to *Rhynchoelaps bertholdi*.

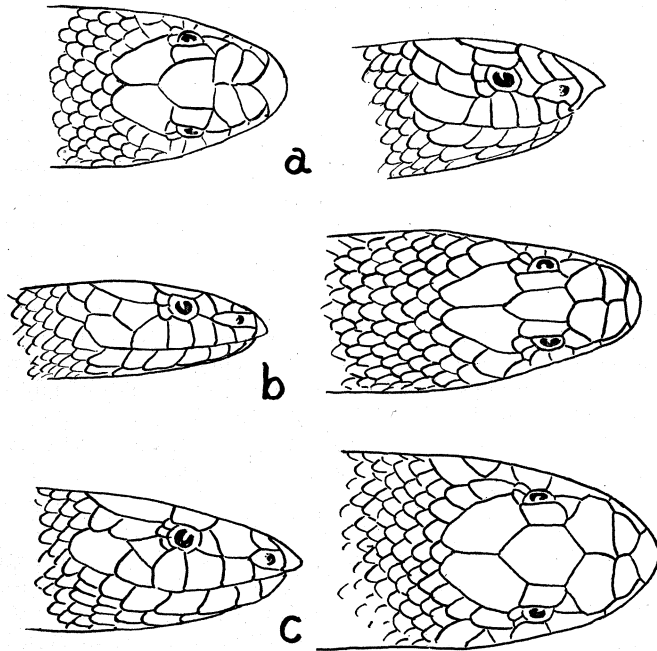


Figure 1.

a—*Brachyuropsis australis* Krefft. b—*Rhynchoelaps bertholdi* Jan. c—*Rhinelaps fasciolatus* Gunther.

Magnification approx. x 4.

In 1863, Gunther, *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.* 3, XI, p. 21, Pl. iii, fig. B, described *Brachyurophis semifasciatus*, a species which has an extraordinary oblique type of head shield common to several other species. These snakes are at present being thoroughly reviewed and types examined before full report can be made. In the meantime this notification of change of nomenclature is made, pending the publication of a comprehensive, but more or less popular book on the Australian snakes, in which the amended names will be used. It is proposed that the following names should now be used:

- Rhynchoelaps bertholdi* Jan.  
*Rhinelaps fasciolatus* Gunther.  
*Rhinelaps approximans* Glauert.  
*Brachyurophis australis* Krefft.  
 „ *semifasciolatus* Gunther.  
 „ *roperi* Kinghorn.  
 „ *campbelli* Kinghorn.  
 „ *wood-jonesi* Thompson.

### 2. THE PRESENCE OF A POST-FRONTAL BONE IN *Furina*.

It has always been accepted that one of the distinguishing characters of the genus *Furina* was the absence of the post-frontal bone, this being recorded as one of the main differences between *Furina* and its nearest affinities.

During a recent examination of a skull treated and stained with alizarin, a very small and triangular post-frontal was found intact.

Without staining the skull, which is a fairly recent method of preparation for examination, this bone may be missed, and even with the most careful dissection it comes away with the integument; hence the general acceptance of its absence as recorded in literature.

### 3. A NEW GENERIC NAME FOR TWO NOMINAL SPECIES OF *Pseudechis*.

For more than thirty years, continued efforts to locate the type of *Pseudechis ferox* (*Diemenia ferox* Macleay) have failed, and it may now be declared lost or inadvertently destroyed. Because of this it has been found necessary to rely on published descriptions and notes, and a critical examination of these indicates a very close affinity between *ferox* and *microlepidotus*.

The slight difference in colour between these is of no specific importance, whilst in regard to scalation, *ferox* was described as having a divided and *microlepidotus* a single anal scale; also considered by me in this instance, of no vital importance, because of the possibility of error or abnormality. I therefore propose to regard *P. ferox* as synonymous with *P. microlepidotus*, and submit the following to show that this snake must be placed in a new genus.

During a close examination of the types it became fairly obvious to me that certain characteristics indicated some small degree of affinity with three genera, viz., *Oxyuranus*, *Pseudechis* and *Demansia*, but because of a certain group of characters *microlepidotus* cannot rightly be classified as belonging to any of these.

Macleay indicated that he placed *ferox* in the genus *Diemenia* rather against his inclination. The presence of three small maxillary teeth following the fang might suggest an affinity with *Pseudechis*, and the paired subcaudals suggest *Demansia*, but no species of this genus has fewer than six maxillary teeth, and certainly not only three. The twenty-three rows of scales round the body might suggest *Oxyuranus*, but they are smooth whereas those of *Oxyuranus* are decidedly keeled; furthermore the anterior portion of the palatine is not prolonged and needle-like as in *Oxyuranus*, but even though slightly produced may be regarded as a normal type and on a level with the front edge of the maxillaries.

So with a normal type of palatine-maxillary relationship; 23 rows of scales which are smooth; 2-3 temporals, a single anal and paired subcaudals, a new generic name is suggested.

**Parademansia**, gen. nov.

*Definition*—Three small maxillary teeth behind the fang. Anal single, subcaudals paired. Anterior portion of the palatine normal, and extending forward to the level of the front edge of the maxillary bones. Scales smooth, in 23 rows.

Genotype, *Pseudechis microlepidotus* McCoy.

**Parademansia microlepidotus** (McCoy).

Fig. 2.

*Diemenia microlepidota* McCoy, *Prod. Zool. Vict.*, 1, (3) 1879, p. 12, Pl. 23, figs. 2-3.

*Diemenia ferox* Macl., *Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.*, vi, 1882, p. 812.

*Description*.—Snout broadly rounded, pupil round. Rostral broader than deep, visible from above. Internasals half as long as the prefrontals, not in contact with the preocular. Frontal broader than the supraocular, once and one-half as long as broad, as long as its distance from the rostral, and about two-thirds the length of the parietal. Nasal divided, in contact with the single preocular. Two postoculars, six upper labials, the third and fourth entering the orbit. There are 23 rows of smooth scales round the middle of the body and from 30 to 36 round the neck. Ventrals 230-237, anal single, subcaudals all divided, in 61-66 pairs. The anterior chin-shields in contact with three lower labials.

*Colour*.—Brown to blackish above, and creamy to white underneath.

*Length*.—The species grows to about seven feet. Two specimens of *microlepidotus* were examined; one measured four feet nine inches and the other six feet one inch.

*Type*, R. 12870 in the National Museum, Melbourne.

*Co-type* R. 12871, in the same collection.

*Localities*.—The junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers. Type of *ferox* (lost): Fort Bourke, N.S.W.

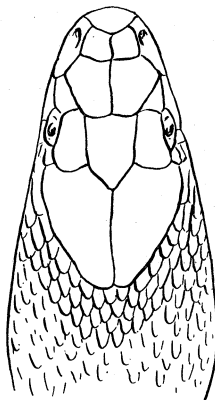


Figure 2.

*Parademansia microlepidotus* McCoy. From the type in the National Museum, Melbourne. Magnification approx.  $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$ .

4. A NEW SPECIES OF *Egernia* FROM QUEENSLAND.***Egernia hosmeri***, sp. nov.

(Plate xiv.)

*Description*.—Head small, depressed, triangular, measured across the nuchals as broad as long. Head shields rugose, some with strongly denticulated posterior borders, thereby giving the appearance of being imbricate. Ear opening larger than the eye, almost hidden under the large anterior spinose scales. There is a groove behind the nostril which is in a long undivided nasal.

The prefrontals form a medium suture and they are larger than the frontoparietals. Frontal broader but not longer than the interparietal, and smaller than the parietals. Frontonasal in contact with the rostral. Five supraoculars, the second being the largest, the posterior one being small and inconspicuous. Seven or eight supraciliaries; eight upper labials, the sixth and seventh under the eye. There are 26 scales round the body, the dorsals being strongly spinose. Two rows of nuchals are mostly tri-spinose, though some are quadri-spinose. The posterior border of the nuchals, being free, and apparently partially erectile, form a fringe or collar from ear to ear. The central dorsal scales carry three spines, though a few may have four. The laterals are also fairly strongly bi-spinose. The free portion of the spines on the dorsals is about half as long as the scale. The tail is cylindrical, though slightly depressed at the base, each scale with a long spine. Limbs small but sturdy, and when adpressed barely meet. There are fifteen lamellae under the fourth toe.

*Colour in Spirits*.—Brownish above with a few scattered darker brown scales. The abdomen is immaculate and whitish; a few dark mottlings under the chin and throat.

*Holotype*, No. R. 12947 in the Australian Museum collection; from Kaban, Queensland, collected by Capt. R. V. Southcott, Sept. 1945. Total length 245 mm., the tail 80 mm., tip missing.

*Co-types*.—R. 14377 from Alappa Junction near Chillago, Q'ld., collected by W. Hosmer. Total length 255 mm., tail 95 mm. R. 14378 from Petford, North Q'ld., collected by R. Robichaux, 28th Dec., 1953. Total length 192 mm., tail 82 mm.

*Affinities*.—*E. hosmeri* is most nearly related to *E. cunninghami*, but *cunninghami* has 36-42 scales round the body. The adpressed limbs overlap and the dorsal scales have a single keel. In *E. stokesii* there are 32-34 body scales, and the tail is flattened and more spiny than in *hosmeri*.

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