

## DISCOVERY OF A LUMINOUS GECKONID LIZARD FROM INDIA

### INTRODUCTION

While surveying the Madar foot hills near Ajmer (Rajasthan) in August 1973 during middle of night I came across this peculiar new Geckonid species on the uneven, barren, stony terrain. I was astonished to see that the lizard was shedding bright light in darkness from its body while moving slowly towards a bush. The mode of progression of the Gecko was so slow that it was easily captured and made a feeble attempt to escape. I at first took it for something else and it was only on carefully examining it subsequently that I found it to be a luminous Gecko. It was slowly moving like a chamaeleon on its four limbs, keeping its body sufficiently raised from the ground. The white bands and spots on the dorsum of the lizard were glowing constantly like a series of candles in darkness.

### *Cyrtodactylus madarensis* n. sp.

#### Rajasthan Luminous Gecko (pl. VII A & B)

*Material examined* (R. C. Sharma Coll.) : Adult ♂, near Madar T. B. Sanitorium C. 5 km. N.W. of Ajmer (Rajasthan, India), Alt. 263. m. ; lat. 26°28'N, long. 74°42'E, 11. viii. 1973 (11.30 P.M.).

### DESCRIPTION

Brownish-black above, with narrow white transverse bars upon the back and tail which meet each other laterally, thus enclosing

rectangular black spots or bars ; a curved white mark upon the nape extending upto the top of snout, below eyes ; a white irregular spot about the shoulders ; white oblique streaks above the eyes ; white irregular spots on the head ; whitish below.

Head moderate ; snout equal to the distance between the eye and the ear opening, which is small as its greatest diameter being about one quarter that of eye ; 9 upper and 10 lower labials. Head covered above with minute rounded scales intermixed with rounded tubercles ; snout with pentagonal or hexagonal scales, intermixed with small rounded scales and are biggest on the anteriormost portion. Body above with small granular scales intermixed with large subtriangular tubercles ; a feebly developed, but distinct lateral fold. Belly with rounded imbricate scales, 30 across the middle. The hind limb extends to the axilla ; subdigital lamellae well developed, as broad as the digit. Tail shorter than the head and body, cylindrical, segmented, not swollen at the base, tapering to a point, covered above with small scales, which are smaller than the ventral scales. No enlarged femoral scales. No femoral or preanal pores.

*Measurements* : Snout to vent length 50 mm. ; tail length 36 mm.

*Type-specimens* : Holotype : ♂ adult, vide material above D.R.S., Z.S.I. Reg. No. V/1215, deposited in National Zoological collections, Zoological Survey of India, Jodhpur.

*Type-locality and distribution* : INDIA.

*Type-locality* : Rocky area near Madar T.B. Sanitorium ca 5 km. N.W. of Ajmer, Rajasthan.

*Distribution* : Known only from the type-locality.

*Comparison* : *Cyrtodactylus madarensis* n. sp. closely resembles *Cyrtodactylus stoliczkai*

(Steindachner) from Kashmir, Ladak and Pakistan but differs from the latter as follows :

(i) 10 lower labials (vs. 8), (ii) Body above having large number of enlarged subtriangular tubercles (vs. enlarged dorsal tubercles are less in number and are feebly keeled), (iii) Lateral fold is absolutely distinct (vs. indistinct), (iv) Tail cylindrical, segmented, not swollen at the base (vs. tail depressed, swollen at the base). Marked difference in colouration.

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