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Taxonomy and natural history of *Eutropis beddomei* (Jerdon, 1870) (Reptilia: Scincidae), including a redescription of the holotype

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Abstract

Euprepes beddomei was described by Jerdon (1870) from "Mysore" (Karnataka State, India). Simultaneously, *Euprepes* (*Tiliqua*) *septemlineatus*, which is morphologically similar to *E. beddomei*, was described by Blanford (1870) based on a single specimen collected from the Ganga River Valley, Southeast Berar, Madhya Pradesh, India. Smith (1935) synonymised the latter species (published in September, 1870) with *Euprepes beddomei* which in turn was published earlier (March, 1870). Jerdon's publication should therefore be given priority. A comprehensive comparison between the holotypes of the above two species confirms that *E. septemlineatus* is a junior synonym of *E. beddomei*. Based on morphological characters, *Eutropis beddomei* is here clearly identified and can be considered a widespread species in India and Sri Lanka. The original description of *E. beddomei* is very short and lacks a description containing most of the important diagnostic characters; hence, we hereby provide a comprehensive description of the species based on the examination of its holotype.

Key words: Biogeography, *Euprepes*, India, *Mabuya*, species complex, Sri Lanka, synonymy

Introduction

The Asian scincid genus *Eutropis* Fitzinger, 1843 is currently represented by 30 species, 13 of whic are known from mainland India (*fide* Venugopal 2010; Uetz & Hallermann 2014; Karin et al. 2016): *Eutropis carinata* (Schneider, 1801), *E. multifasciata* (Kuhl, 1820), *E. trivittata* (Hardwicke & Gray, 1827), *E. bibronii* (Gray, 1839), *E. macularia* (Blyth, 1853), *E. dissimilis* (Hallowell, 1857), *E. beddomei* (Jerdon, 1870), *E. innotata* (Blanford, 1870), *E. quadricarinata* (Boulenger, 1887), *E. rudis* (Boulenger, 1887), *E. nagarjuni* (Sharma, 1969), *E. clivicola* (Inger, Shaffer, Koshy & Bakde, 1984), and *E. gansi* (Das, 1991). There are seven species reported from Sri Lanka of which three are endemics: *E. madaraszi* (Méhely, 1897), *E. floweri* (Taylor, 1950), *E. tammanna* Das, de Silva & Austin, 2008 (Smith 1935; Somaweera & Somaweera 2009) whilst *E. carinata*, *E. bibronii*, *E. macularia*, and *E. beddomei* shared between India and Sri Lanka.

Euprepes beddomei was described by Jerdon (1870). However, he did not state the number of specimens examined. Currently, there is only one type specimen available in the collections at Natural History Museum, London BMNH 1946.8.19.17, (previously BMNH 1870.11.29.10). The museum catalogue indicates "type" (see the discussion later for a full explanation) with the type locality "Mysore" (Karnataka State, India). In the original description, Jerdon (1870) compared his new species with *Euprepis trilineatus* Gray, 1846, [currently a synonym of

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Eutropis bibronii (*fide* Boulenger 1885)] and listed several diagnostic morphological characters. Simultaneously, *Euprepes* (*Tiliqua*) *septemlineatus*, which is morphologically similar to *E. beddomei* was described by Blanford (1870), from a single specimen (holotype by monotypy) collected by John Anderson from the Ganga River Valley, Southeast Berar, Madhaya Pradesh, India. Boulenger (1885) placed these species in the genus *Mabuia*. Later, Smith (1935) synonymised Blanford's species under *Mabuya beddomii*. Subsequently, Asian *Mabuya* species were placed in the genus *Eutropis* by Mausfeld *et al*. (2000) and the following authors recorded *Eutropis beddomei* from various locations in India and in Sri Lanka: Smith (1935), Deraniyagala (1953), Taylor (1953), Das (1996), Hettige *et al*. (2000), Das (2001, 2002), Das & de Silva (2005), Somaweera & Somaweera (2009), Karunarathna & Amarasinghe (2011) and Peabotuwage *et al*. (2012).

Whilst examining skink material at the Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata (ZSI); the National Museums of Sri Lanka, Colombo (NMSL); and the BMNH, we found specimens of *Eutropis beddomei* collected from several different parts of India and Sri Lanka. The original description of *Euprepes beddomei* is short, lacking most of the important diagnostic characters. Thus, we here provide a comprehensive redescription of the species based on the examination of its holotype. The status of the nomen *Euprepes septemlineatus* Blanford, 1870 as a junior synonym of *Eutropis beddomei* (Jerdon, 1870) is here empirically confirmed.

Material and methods

We compared several morphological characters of specimens (including types) housed at the BMNH, ZSI, NMSL and other known congeners (listed under other specimens examined). Museum acronyms follow Sabaj Pérez (2014). We took measurements on the left side of the body to the nearest 0.1 mm with a Mitutoyo digital caliper and a Leica EZ4 dissecting microscope, of the following characters: snout–vent length (SVL, from tip of snout to anterior margin of vent), brachium length (on the dorsal surface from the axilla to the inflection of the flexed elbow), antebrachium length (on the dorsal surface from the posterior margin of the elbow while flexed to the inflection of the flexed wrist), thigh length (from the anterior margin of the hind limb at its insertion point on the body to the knee while flexed), shank length (from the posterior surface of the knee while flexed to the base of the heel), axilla–groin length (from the posterior margin of the forelimb at its insertion point on the body to the anterior margin of the hind limb at its insertion point on the body), head length (from posterior edge of mandible to tip of snout); head width (maximum width of head), orbit diameter (the greatest horizontal diameter of the orbit); tympanum–eye length (from posterior border of orbit to anterior border of tympanum), snout length (from anterior border of orbit to tip of snout).

A subset of eight variables (HL, HW, ES, TYE, ED, AG, TBL and FEL) were standardized to SVL and subjected to a principal component analysis with PAST 3.0 to discern pattern in morphological variation among the examined specimens. The resulting factor scores were plotted against each other to examine separation.

We counted supralabial and infralabial scales from the rictus to the rostral and mental scales respectively. Our counts of ventrals include all scales from the first scale anterior to cloaca to the median gular scale touching the postmental. We counted paravertebral scale rows from the first median dorsal scale in contact with the nuchal to the dorsal median scale opposite the cloaca. We counted subdigital lamellae under toe IV from the first proximal enlarged scansor wider than the width of the largest sole scale to the distal-most lamella at the base of the claw. We counted the number of longitudinal scale rows at midbody.

We determined the sex of specimens by the presence or absence of everted hemipenes or dissection wherever possible. We assessed the information concerning the conservation status and risk of extinction of *Eutropis beddomei* in Sri Lanka based on the Red List Categories and Criteria in IUCN Standards and Petitions Subcommittee (2013; version 10.1). We used standard thermometers, hygrometers and lux meters to record environmental parameters during our field observations in Sri Lanka. We obtained distribution data from examined specimens as well as published literature with reliable identifications and locations based on precise GPS coordinates whenever possible. The live specimens were not collected, but photographed with locality details.

Results

As the original description of *Eutropis beddomei* is short and lacks most of the important diagnostic characters, we

provide a comprehensive redescription of the species based on its holotype (BMNH 1946.8.19.17). A comprehensive comparison between the holotypes of *Euprepis beddomei* and *E. septemlineatus* shows that the latter nomen is a junior synonym (see Table 1). T.C. Jerdon's "Notes on Indian Herpetology" was published in the Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal in March, 1870. The same species (a synonym) was described by W.T. Blanford in the Journal of Asiatic Society Bengal. However Blanford's publication was printed on 3 September 1870. Therefore, according to the principle of priority (Article 23) and the principle of homonymy (Article 52) of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN,) 1999, the description of Jerdon (1870) has priority over that of Blanford (1870). Morphometric, meristic, and morphological data taken for all the specimens are given in Table 1.

Our multivariate analysis of standardized morphometric characters from the examined adult specimens did not generate any distinct clusters which corresponded to their collecting localities. These close morphometric similarities between examined specimens may indicate a close link between all examined geographic populations. Hence, we treat this as a single morphologically homogenous species distributed widely across peninsular India and the dry lowland of Sri Lanka.

***Eutropis beddomei* (Jerdon, 1870)**

(Figures 1–5, Tables 1, 2)

Synonym. *Euprepes* [sic] (*Tiliqua*) *septemlineatus* Blanford, 1870

Holotype (by monotypy)**.** Adult male, BMNH 1946.8.19.17, "Mysore", Karnataka State, India, collected by Thomas Claverhill Jerdon prior to 1870.

Other specimens examined (*n*=20). Sri Lanka: Pundalu Oya: BMNH 1905.3.25.21 (SVL 57.0 mm); Polonnaruwa: NMSL uncatalogued. India: Berar, Madhya Pradesh: ZSI 2354 (SVL 53.6 mm), 2355 (SVL 52.8 mm), 2356 (SVL 43.4 mm; holotype of *Euprepes septemlineatus*); Tamil Nadu: ZSI 12921 (SVL 54.8 mm); BMNH 1882.5.22.106–108 (SVL 55.8 mm, 53.5 mm, 52.0 mm respectively); 1874.4.29.141–145 (SVL 54.5 mm, 55.1 mm, 51.8 mm, 56.8 mm, 50.0 mm respectively); Kerala: ZSI 21872 (SVL 57.3 mm), 21873a–b (SVL 51.4 mm, 46.7 mm respectively); BMNH 1874.4.29.1296b–d (SVL 43.5 mm, 41.2 mm, 41.4 mm respectively); Maharashtra: BMNH 1874.4.29.1452 (SVL 50.0 mm).

Diagnosis. The following combination of characters distinguishes *Eutropis beddomei* from all other Indian and Sri Lankan congeners: five pale vertebral stripes on the back, divided (scaly) lower-eyelid disc, 29–34 midbody scale rows, 48–54 paravertebral scales, 53–59 ventrals, three (rarely four) keels on dorsal scales, 12–16 subdigital lamellae under fourth toe and a single pair of large smooth nuchals (Figs. 1–3).

Description of holotype. Male, SVL 50.0 mm. Head moderately large (head length 22.4% of SVL, head length 41.8% of axilla-groin distance), narrow (head width 65.2% of head length, head width 14.6% of SVL), indistinct from neck; snout short (snout length 35.7% of head length, snout length 54.8% of head width), slightly concave in lateral profile; rostral shield large, hemispherical, distinctly visible from above, posterior margin of midpoint curved towards the internasal; frontonasal completely separated from rostral by internasals in wide contact; frontonasal narrow, lateral border touching first loreal; prefrontals in contact and completely separated from the frontal and the frontonasal, distance along the longitudinal axis of frontonasal equals length of prefrontals, lower border touching both loreal scales, the posterior border touching the first supraocular, and frontal; frontal large, elongate, subtriangular, rounded posteriorly, shorter in length than combined frontoparietals and interparietal; two frontoparietals in contact, distinct, each larger than interparietal; interparietal with a grey coloured parietal eye (pineal eye); parietals large and completely separated by interparietal, touching temporal scales laterally; single pair of nuchals, overlapping mid-dorsally behind interparietal. Nostril large and placed in the middle of nasal; two loreals, anterior touching internasal, frontonasal and prefrontal; posterior loreal longer than anterior loreal in the longitudinal axis, touching prefrontal and first supracilliary; five preoculars, 3rd largest; eye large (orbit diameter 15.2% of head length), orbit diameter smaller than tympanum-eye length, pupil rounded; interorbital distance broad; three postoculars; four wide supraoculars, second supraocular is the longest in the longitudinal axis and the widest in the transverse axis and is in full contact with the frontal; first supraocular in contact with prefrontal; 2nd and 3rd supraoculars in contact with frontoparietals; 4th supraoculars in contact with frontoparietal, parietal, and upper pretemporal scale; three pretemporals; six supracilliaries; moveable

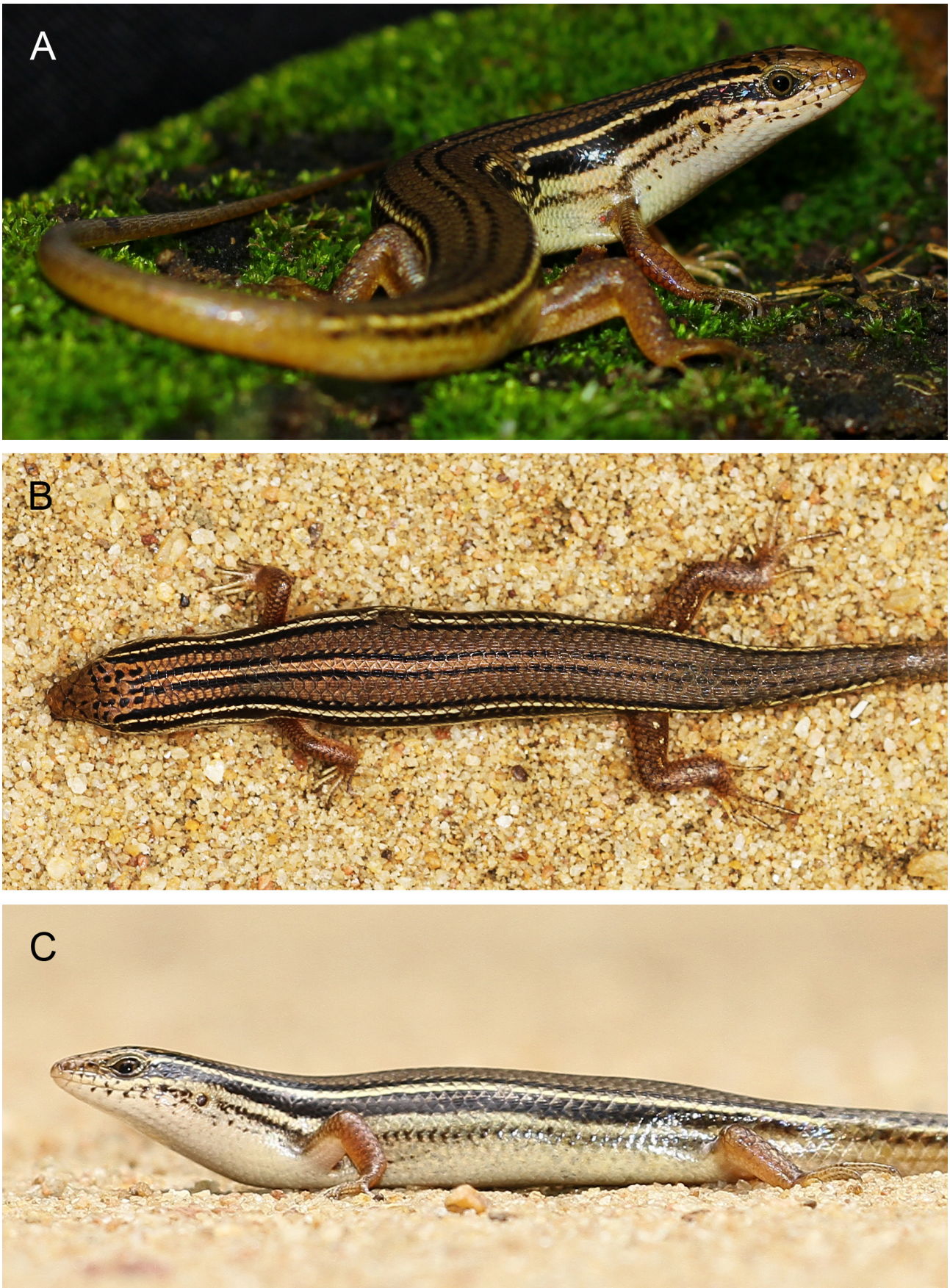


FIGURE 1. Photographs in life of a male *Eutropis beddomei* (not collected) at Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka (photo: *a.* H.D.K. Kandambi, *b* & *c* D.M.S.S. Karunarathna).

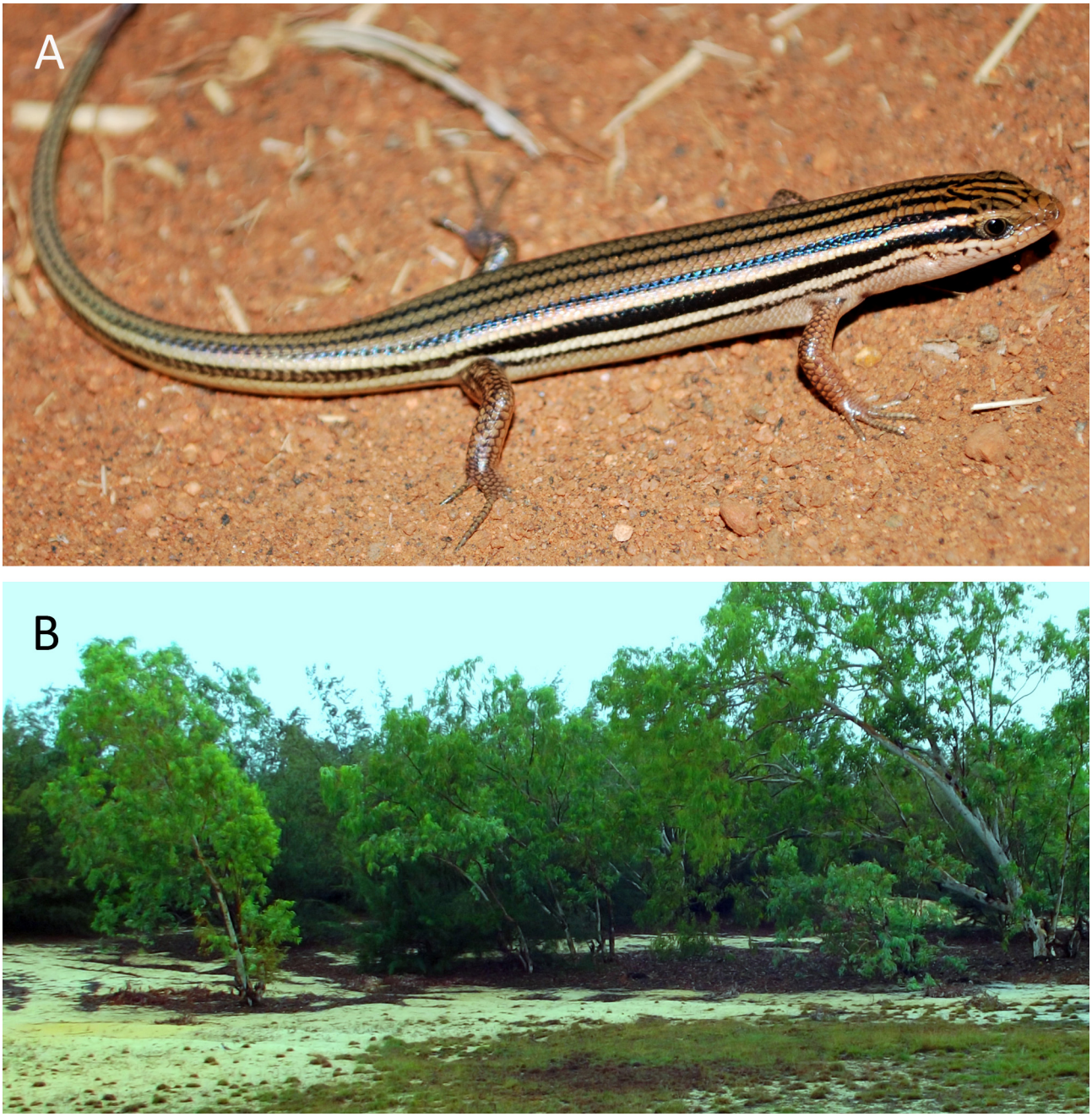


FIGURE 2. (*a*) Photographs in life of a male *Eutropis beddomei* (not collected) at type locality, Mysore, Karnataka State, India (photo: V.P. Cyriac); (*b*) Habitat of *E. beddomei* in Nanthi Kadal, Mullaitivu District, Sri Lanka (photo: H.D.K. Kandambi).

eyelid covered with a transparent disc divided into five segments. Six supralabials, fifth largest and at mid orbit position (5th and 6th touching eye); three primary temporals, three secondary temporals; six infralabials; ear opening deep, small, near spherical and approximately one quarter of eye diameter; six short pre-auricular lobes on each anterior tympanum. Mental large; a single large postmental followed by two chin shield pairs, the first pair not meeting along midline, the first chinshield in contact with first and second infralabial scales, the second pair in contact with second and third infralabials (Fig. 3).

Body slender, elongate (axilla-groin distance 53.6% of SVL); with the exception of head shields, nuchal pair and first row of dorsal scales, all body scales are tricarinate; all scales are imbricate and lack apical pits; midbody scale rows 33; paravertebral scale rows 50; ventrals 59; five enlarged preanal scales.

Forelimbs short; dorsal and ventral surfaces of forelimbs smooth; hind limbs relatively long (thigh length 11.4% of SVL, shank length 14.0% of SVL); thigh short and 81.4% of shank length; dorsal surfaces of hind limbs

keeled; subdigital lamellae on toe IV, 14; relative length of fingers: IV > III > II > V > I; that of toes: IV > III > V > II > I.

Tail broken, median scale row of subcaudals attached to the body subequal while the median row of broken tail is enlarged, wider than length.

Variation. The variation between the holotype and other examined materials are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Morphometric (in mm) and meristric characters of *Eutropis beddomei* based on type material and other examined specimens compared with the holotype of *Euprepes septemlineatus* (listed under other specimens examined).

Character	Holotype of *E. beddomei* BMNH 1946.8.19.17	Holotype of *E. septemlineatus* ZSI 2356	other (n=19)
SVL	50.0	43.4	41.2–57.3
Head length	11.2	10.5	10.1–13.8
Head width	7.3	5.9	6.7–9.9
Snout length	4.0	3.5	3.4–4.7
Orbit diameter	1.7	2.4	1.8–4.1
Tympanum–eye length	3.5	2.6	3.0–4.5
Axilla–groin length	26.8	24.5	19.8–35.4
Thigh length	5.7	5.4	4.5–7.9
Shank length	7.0	5.5	4.5–7.9
Midbody scale rows	33	28	29–34
Paravertebrals	50	50	48–54
Ventrals	59	damaged	53–59
Toe IV lamellae	14	15	12–16

Colouration in preservative. Based on the holotype. Dorsal head, body and limbs dark brown, snout and frontal yellowish brown. Five pale longitudinal stripes present on the body (one mid-dorsal and two laterally/on each side), the three bands on the mid-dorsum are light, grayish-brown while the two bands on lateral side are cream. The three mid-dorsal bands begin at the first dorsal scale and extend to the tail, while the two lateral bands (one on each side) start behind the eye and extend to the tail over the tympanum and limbs. Each of these five bands covers a width of, approximately, one scale or less. Lateral body, belly and subcaudals creamy white.

Colouration in life. The live body colouration is more or less the same as in preserved specimen. Further characters are visible in Figures 1 and 2.

Comparison with other species. Congeners from mainland India and Sri Lanka have the following suite of characters that distinguish them from *Eutropis beddomei*. Unlike *E. beddomei*, *E. bibronii*, *E. dissimilis*, *E. innotata*, and *E. nagarjuni* have undivided lower-eyelid discs (vs. divided/scaly). *Eutropis beddomei* has three keels on its dorsal scales (vs. 5–7 keels in *E. trivittata*; and 6 or 7 keels in *E. tammanna)*. *Eutropis carinata*, *E. multifasciata*, and *E. rudis* have a uniform olive-brown dorsum lacking clearly visible bands; and *E. madaraszi* has a pale dorsolateral stripe from supralabials to midtail (vs. five pale complete or incomplete vertebral stripes). *Eutropis clivicola* has 17–19 subdigital lamellae under fourth toe (vs. 14–16). *Eutropis gansi* has 41 ventrals (vs. 55–59). *E. macularia* and *E. floweri* have 34–37 and *E. quadricarinata* has 41–43 paravertebral scales (vs. 48–54).

Distribution and natural history. From the specimens we examined, *Eutropis beddomei* is recorded from Tamil Nadu State (Anantagiri, Chennai), Madhya Pradesh (SE Berar), Odisha State (Ghatgaon), and Kerala State (Palghat) in India. Additional data regarding its distribution in peninsular India were recently summarized by Srinivasulu *et al*. (2014). In Sri Lanka we observed this species from Polonnaruwa District: Kalu-Kale (7°46'37.67" N, 81°˚03'29.96"E, alt. 60 m), Polonnaruwa (7°46'72.91" N, 81°˚03'37.72"E, alt. 53 m); Monaragala District: Maldam-Ambe (7°12'30.21" N, 81°18'52.97"E, alt. 220 m), Nilgala (7°11'N, 81°18'E, alt. 200 m); Ampara District: Gal Oya (7°13'N, 81°22'E, alt. 100 m); Trincomalee District: Gantalawa (8°26'02.37" N, 81°18'52.97"E, alt. 27 m); Kegalle District: Uda Maliboda (6°53'01.58" N, 80°26'31.18"E, alt. 300 m); Mullaitivu District: Nanthi Kadal (9°17'N, 80°46'E; pers. comm. D.K. Kandambi with photographic evidence) (Fig. 4).



FIGURE 3. *Eutropis beddomei* holotype (BMNH 1946.8.19.17) (*a*) dorsal and (*b*) lateral aspect of the head.

TABLE 2. Loadings for the first four principal components (PC) of morphometric characters in *Eutropis beddomei*.

	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 5	PC 6	PC 7	PC 8
HL/SVL	0.55	0.07	0.28	-0.12	0.12	0.30	-0.27	-0.65
HW/SVL	0.41	0.41	-0.28	0.06	-0.12	-0.09	0.74	-0.11
ES/SVL	0.48	0.09	0.11	-0.56	0.20	-0.22	-0.14	0.57
TYE/SVL	0.36	0.26	-0.16	0.71	-0.03	0.10	-0.40	0.33
ED/SVL	0.19	-0.37	0.67	0.23	-0.27	0.23	0.36	0.27
AG/SVL	-0.29	0.45	0.19	-0.02	0.54	0.57	0.17	0.18
TBL/SVL	0.16	-0.47	-0.09	0.28	0.75	-0.26	0.20	-0.07
FEL/SVL	0.17	-0.44	-0.56	-0.19	-0.08	0.63	0.04	0.14
Eigenvalue	2.48	1.88	1.08	0.93	0.72	0.46	0.30	0.14
% variance	31.06	23.55	13.46	11.59	9.03	5.81	3.77	1.74

Based on our observations, *E. beddomei* is a diurnal skink active between 7:00 and 16:00 hrs. It is able to move very quickly on dry sandy soil. It usually occurs up to an elevation of 300 m. The environmental parameters in their microhabitat during the day time are as follows: ambient temperature, 30.2–31.5 ˚C; ambient humidity, 58–64%; ambient light intensity, 3428–4047 lux based on eight observations in open, dry shrub areas (at Polonnaruwa and Gantalawa, Sri Lanka). According to field observations, its diet consists mostly of brown coloured grasshoppers, small ground and litter-dwelling spiders, coleopteran beetles, noisy crickets and several other small insects. At night, this species hides under rocks, logs or leaf litter. The environmental parameters in the microhabitat at night

are as follows: ambient temperature, 27.8–28.4 ˚C; ambient humidity, 68–75%; and ambient light intensity, 17–28 lux based on three observations in open dry shrub areas (at Maldam-Ambe, Sri Lanka). During the morning hours (7:00–10:00 hr) they are actively foraging, but during the afternoon (12:00–14:00 hr) they rest in shady places. Information on the reproductive cycle of this species is unknown. We observed this species living in sympatric with other skink species such as *Eutropis carinata, E. macularia, E. tammanna, Lankascincus fallax* and *Lygosoma punctata* in a variety of different habitats. During the day individuals are able to escape quickly and hide in root holes, under grasses, in earth crevices, under dry stones or logs when disturbed. At night, we observed them sleeping under stones or logs, buried under white coloured sandy soil.

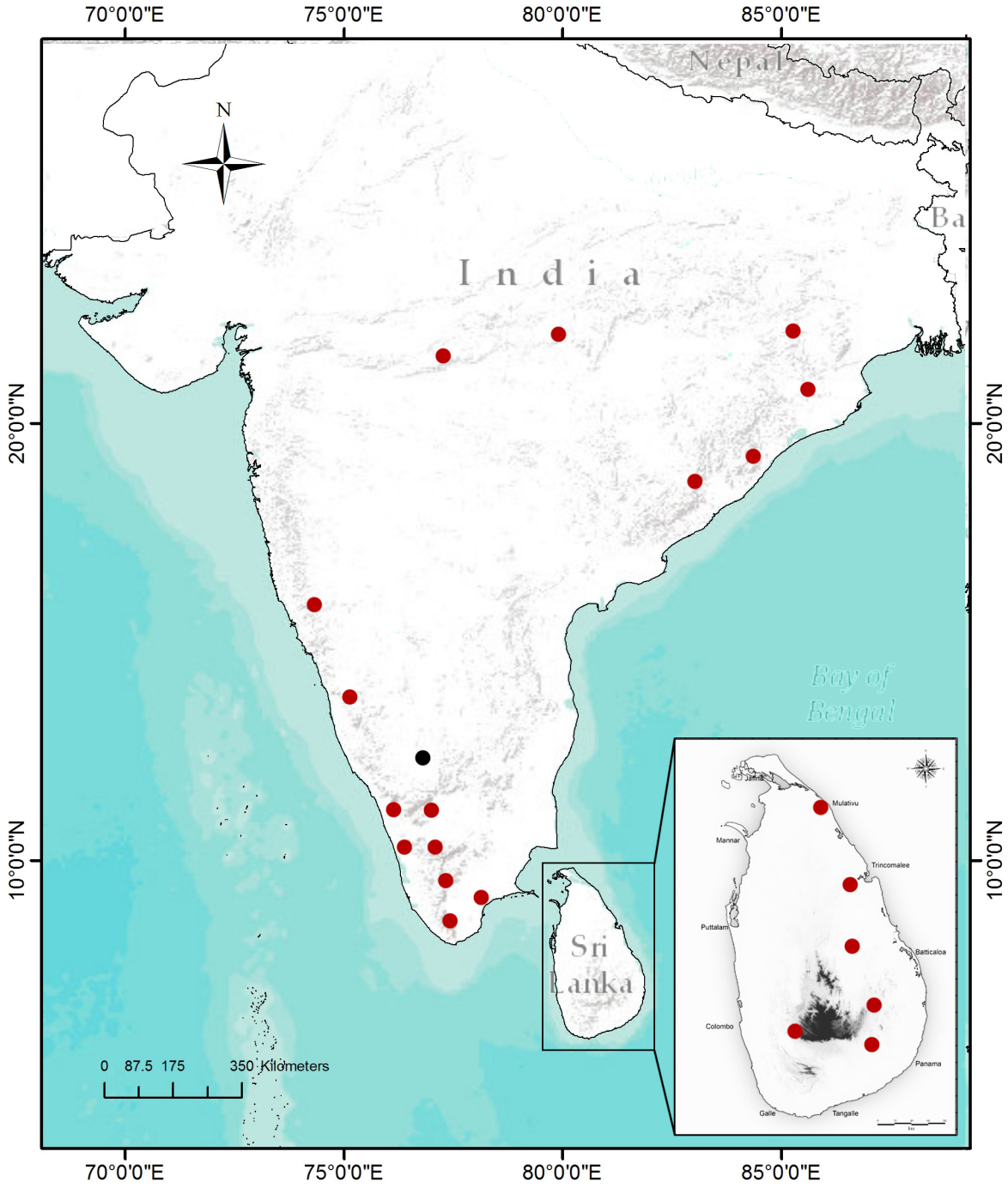


FIGURE 4. Current distribution pattern of *Eutropis beddomei* in India and Sri Lanka (red circles), based on examined material, personal observations, and published literature (type locality is marked in black circle).

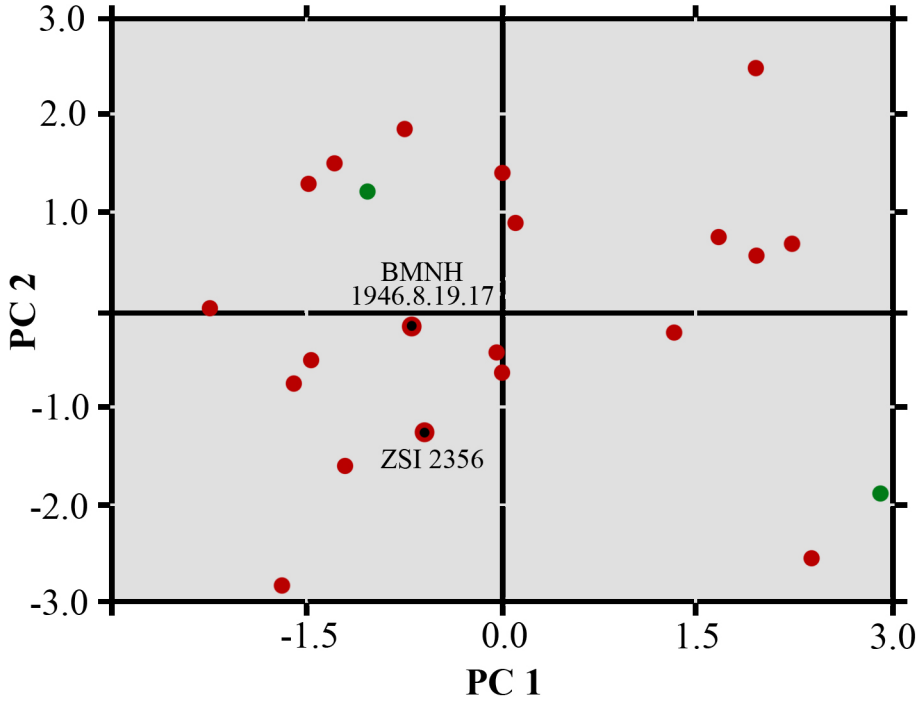


FIGURE 5. PCA ordination plot (PC1 vs. PC2) of the morphometric variation of *E. beddomei* from different locations in India (red) and Sri Lanka (green); each point represents a specimen; and the relative distances between two points represents the similarity. The red circle with black dot in the middle represents the examined holotypes *Euprepes beddomei* (BMNH 1946.8.19.17) and *E. septemlineatus* (ZSI 2356).

Forest fragmentations are identified as major threats. Forest clearing and the burning of bush lands for farming, plowing the soil using heavy vehicles, and the use of the pesticides also adversely affect survival of this skink. We observed several species as natural predators– birds: southern coucal (*Centropus parroti*), common mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*), and white-throated kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*); snakes: Indian krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*), buff-striped keelback (*Amphiesma stolatum*), green vine-snake (*Ahaetulla nasuta*), common bronze-back (*Dendrelaphis tristis*), and Merrem's hump-nosed viper (*Hypnale hypnale*); lizards: juvenile land monitors (*Varanus bengalensis*).

Conservation status (Sri Lanka). The result of the application to the IUCN Red List (2013) criteria B2ab (ii, iii) indicates that the *Eutropis beddomei* population in Sri Lanka is Vulnerable (VU). It is restricted to an area of occupancy (AOO) <150 km^2 (6 spotting sites) with an extent of occurrence (EOO) <20,000 km^2 in the northeastern and eastern dry zones within different forested areas.

Discussion

Phylogeography, intraspecific variation and speciation processes of the Asian genus *Eutropis* were investigated by Mausfeld & Schmitz (2003). However, their suggested taxonomic rearrangement has raised a debate (see Datta-Roy *et al*. 2012, 2015; Barley *et al*. 2015).

In Jerdon's (1870) original description of *Euprepes beddomei*, the species epithet was clearly written as "*beddomei*", a noun in genitive case, to honour Richard Henry Beddome (1830–1911) who was a British military officer working in India, and the chief conservator of the Madras Forest Department. He was also a famous naturalist (Adler 2007). However, in many taxonomic publications the species epithet has been used erroneously as "*beddomii*": e.g. Boulenger (1885, 1890), Smith (1935), Deraniyagala (1953), Taylor (1953), Das (1991, 1996), Mausfeld *et al*. (2000), Das & de Silva (2005), Somaweera & Somaweera (2009), and Datta-Roy *et al*. (2012) among others. Article 33.1 of the ICZN, fourth edition (ICZN 1999) states that "the original spelling of a name or epithet is to be retained, except for the correction of typographical or orthographical errors". In this case the original epithet has no such errors, and thus the epithet "*beddomei*" should be retained as per the ICZN directive.

The holotye *Eutropis beddomei*, BMNH 1946.8.19.17, was registered at the British Museum in 1870 and was given the earlier catalogue number, BMNH 1870.11.29.10, it was then re-registered in 1946 following World War II. The original label on the jar reads "type". The specimen was presented to the museum by Jerdon on 29th November 1870 according to the original BMNH register. This is the only specimen of this species collected by Jerdon in the BMNH collection. The other 19 specimens at the BMNH were collected from India and Sri Lanka, and registered, after the original description was written in the following years, in 1874, 1882 and 1905. All of these were presented by Beddome, apart from BMNH1905.3.25.21, which was collected in Sri Lanka and presented by E. E. Green Esq. Thomas Claverhill Jerdon (1811–1872) returned to England (from India) in June 1870 and Amarasinghe *et al*. (2015) suggested that Jerdon took his collection to England to complete his descriptions in full. Unfortunately, Jerdon died in 1872 (Elliot 1873) before having completed those descriptions. Amarasinghe *et al*. (2015) further suggested that Jerdon's collection most probably was given to the BMNH after his death or given to John Edward Gray, who was the curator of zoology at the British Museum from 1840 until 1875. It is clear that Jerdon's collection (or part) was deposited before his bereavement in 1872, because the register supports the incorporation of these specimens was completed in 1870 by Gray. The possibility that there may have been several syntypes involved, with only one ending up at the BMNH leaving the others in Indian Museums (now ZSI), has to be excluded because we examined the entire *Eutropis beddomei* collection at ZSI and no syntypes were presented there. Therefore, we accept the former BMNH 1946.8.19.17 specimen as the correct holotype (by monotypy) for this taxon.

An old label of *Euprepes septemlineatus* (inside the jar) states that it is a syntype (ZSI 2354–56). However, Blanford (1870) clearly states that he had only one specimen to hand at the time. Therefore, the type of *E. septemlineatus* should be a holotype (by monotypy) and not a syntype from a series of specimens. Das *et al*. (1998) determined ZSI 2356 as the holotype of *E. septemlineatus*. Here, we comprehensively compared all three specimens (ZSI 2354–56) labelled as *E. septemlineatus* to the original description, and only ZSI 2356 matches. Therefore, we agree with Das *et al*. (1998) and accept ZSI 2356 as the holotype of *E. septemlineatus* and disregard ZSI 2354–55 as types.

According to our morphological and meristic observations, the *Eutropis beddomei* population of dry lowland Sri Lanka (Gantalawa, Polonnaruwa, Nilgala, Eluwankulama, Tabbowa, Kalu-Kale, Maldam-Ambe, Trincomalee, Nanthi Kadal) are morphologically identical to the Indian populations of *Eutropis beddomei*. The following reports of Deraniyagala (1953), Smith (1935), Somaweera & Somaweera (2009), Peabotuwage *et al.* (2012) from Pundaluoya (~1000 m elevation in the central highlands), Udamaleboda (~900 m elevation in the central highlands) and Elkaduwa (~750 m elevation in the Knuckles massif) are doubtful since none of our examined specimens were collected above 300 m elevation. Therefore, it is essential to collect and examine a reasonable number of specimens (and to undertake DNA analysis) from populations throughout its range in order to make an assessment of their precise taxonomic status and conservation priorities.

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