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A NEW VARANUS FROM COQUET ISLAND, QUEENSLAND.

By

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(Plates xvii-xviii.)

VARANUS BOULENGERI *sp. nov.*

Varanus sp. De Vis. Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. (2), i, 1887, p. 1137.

Varanus sp. nov. Boulenger. Zool. Record, 1887 (Reptilia), p. 11.

Teeth obtuse, inclined to be conical. Snout broad, as long as the distance from the anterior angle of the orbit to the anterior angle of the ear orifice. Canthus rostralis obtuse, indistinct. Nostril broadly oval, almost circular, situated nearer the tip of the snout than the eye. The distance from the eye to the centre of nostril is 9.5 mm, and from the nostril to the snout 8 mm. Ear opening oblique, about as large as the eye. Scales of head, including supraoculars, flat, smooth, irregular in shape and size, the larger ones being situated round about the central line. Scales on occipital regions smaller than those on fore part of head, but larger than the temporals. Lower eyelid scaly, the scales of the central horizontal line being largest and dark coloured. Scales of dorsal surface smallest on neck, largest towards the tail; they are broadly oval in shape, smooth, and more or less flattened, though those on the neck are strongly convex. Lower labial and chin scales largest on the outside, becoming gradually smaller towards the mental groove, and larger again towards the nuchal fold where they are smallest. Abdominal scales large, rectangular, longer than broad, disposed in 74 rows from nuchal fold to groin. These scales are, here and there, incompletely separated, giving the under surface the appearance of having transverse folds of the skin, each fold bearing many incomplete grooves. Feet slender, third and fourth fingers subequal, the fourth not as long as the distance from the eye to the snout. Tail cylindrical and somewhat depressed at base, but becoming laterally compressed and keeled towards the tip. Scales of dorsal surface of tail more or less flattened at base, like those on body, but keeled towards the tip. Scales of ventral surface of tail similar at the base to those of the abdomen, but becoming more elongate and strongly keeled posteriorly.

Colour (in spirits).—Limbs and dorsal surface light grey, covered with dark, almost black blotches, which here and there tend to form irregular transverse bars. The upper surface of the head is suffused with a brownish tinge. Under surface yellowish, crossed here and there by indistinct, pale grey cross bars. Chin, throat, and sides of neck spotted. Tail marked at the base much the same as the body, but becoming more uniformly coloured towards the tip.

Locality.—Holotype from Coquet Island, Howick Group, Queensland, lat. 14° S., long. 144° E. The two other specimens before me, R.6144 and R.6735, are both from Townsville, Queensland.

Holotype.—Register number R.8083, Australian Museum.

The measurements of the specimens are given below in millimetres:

	Holotype.	R.6735.	R6144
Snout to vent	195	234	245
Vent to tip of tail	145	315	340
Length of head	39	41	42
Greatest breadth of head	27	28	28
Breadth of nostrils	13	13.5	13.5
Depth at eyes	15	17	17
Fore limb and claws	47	57	61
Hind limb	65	78	78
Length of eye	6	8	7
Scales around body	98	102	99
Longitudinal abdominal rows	74	80	84
Total length	440	549	585

De Vis¹ in describing a specimen from Herbert River, Queensland, had a suspicion that it might have been a local variety of *Varanus prasinus*, or at least a new record, as the latter is not known to occur nearer to Australia than some of the islands of Torres Strait, but he did not attempt to name it or suggest that it was a new species. Later, Mr. Boulenger recorded De Vis' find as a new species; he also refrained from attaching a name, evidently because he did not have access to the specimen. As I have not seen this specimen, I can only suggest that, from the description given by De Vis, it is identical with those before me, and therefore I am pleased to be able to give it a name which will in some way associate its founding with Mr. Boulenger, who was the first to suggest that it was new.

The specimens before me differ from *V. prasinus* in more than half a dozen good characters, as a perusal of the descriptions and a glance at the figures will show.

The holotype was collected by Mr. C. Hedley, and I am indebted to him for references to various notes dating back to the time of Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks. Cook² landed on an island about 20 miles south-east of Coquet Island, and, seeing there many lizards of large size, named the locality Lizard Island. It is recorded that some of them were captured, but I can find no reference to their being described. In 1901 Dr. A. E. Finckh³ visited the island, and brought back a collection which comprised four species of *Lygosoma*, but he

¹ De Vis—loc. cit.

² Hawkesworth—Account of the voyages undertaken . . . for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the *Dolphin*, the *Swallow*, and the *Endeavour*. . . . Vol. iii, 1773, p. 598.

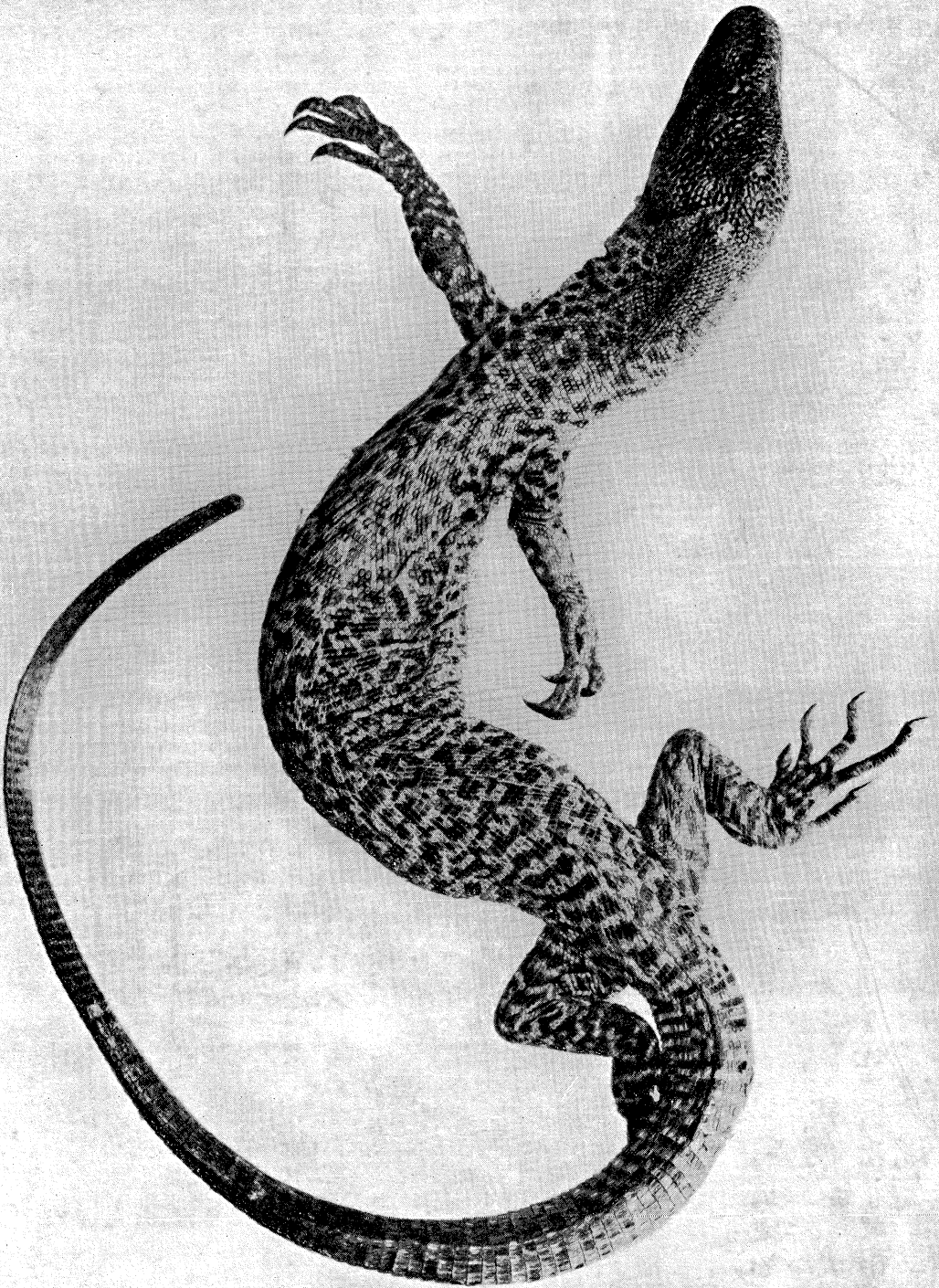
³ Johnston—Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W., (2) xxvi, 1901, p. 214.

did not see any trace of larger lizards such as *Varanus*. As Cook does not say just how big the lizards on the island were, I venture to suggest that they were either identical with, or closely allied to, the species described in this paper from Coquet Island.

Mr. Hedley informed me that the lizard was found running along the beach.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVII.

Varanus boulengeri, *sp. nov.* Holotype, natural size, from Coquet Island, Howick Group, Queensland, long. 144° E., lat. 14° S.



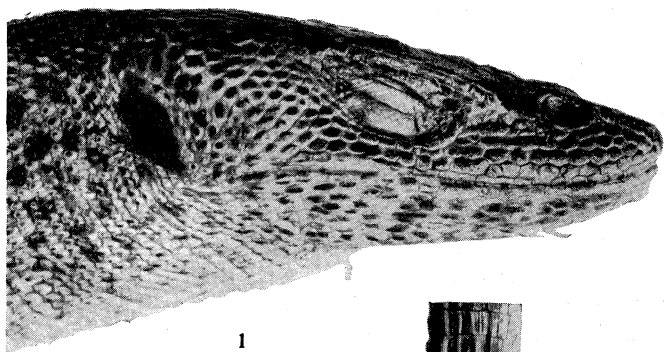
G. C. CLUTTON, photo.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVIII.

Varanus boulengeri sp. nov.

Holotype.

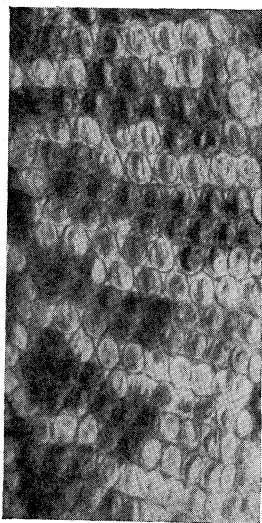
- Fig. 1. Lateral view of head showing comparative distances between ear, eye, nostril and snout. Magnified $\times 2$
- „ 2. Dorsal view of head showing size and arrangement of scales. Magnified $\times 2$.
- „ 3. Dorsal scales. Magnified $\times 4$.
- „ 4. Lateral view of mid section of tail. Magnified $\times 4$.
- „ 5. Left hand. Magnified $\times 2$.
- „ 6. Section of abdominal scales. Magnified $\times 2$.



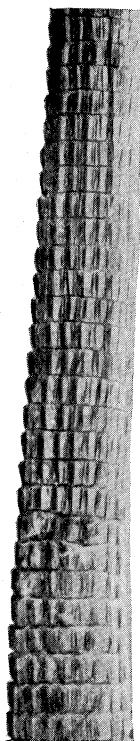
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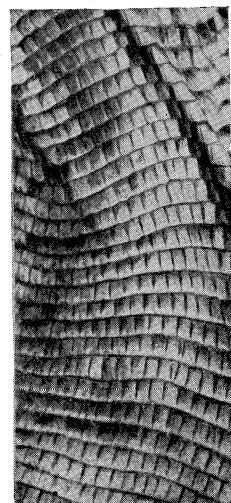
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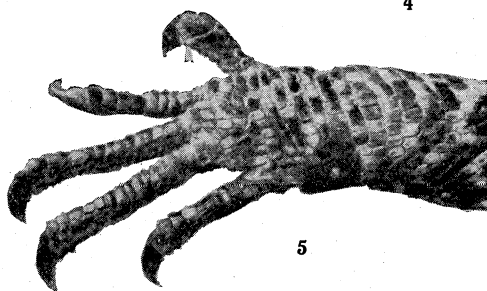
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