

# A NEW SPECIES OF *LEIOLOPISMA* (LACERTILIA: SCINCIDAE) FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA, WITH NOTES ON THE BIOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS OF OTHER AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

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## SUMMARY

*Leiolopisma baudini* n. sp. is described on the basis of a single specimen from the vicinity of Point Culver, Western Australia. The new species is quite distinct and relatively primitive. Its closest living relative appears to be *L. entrecasteauxii* from southeastern Australia. Brief notes are provided on certain aspects of habitat, female reproduction and colour hues of most of the mainland Australian and Tasmanian species of *Leiolopisma*, and these data are used to support Rawlinson's (1974b and 1975) suggestion that the Australian species of the genus, at least, form two subgroups. A key is also provided to the described species of *Leiolopisma* from mainland Australia and Tasmania.

## INTRODUCTION

During the course of a botanical survey in the area just west of Point Culver, Western Australia in October 1973, Mr Michael J. Brooker collected a number of reptiles which were subsequently lodged in the Western Australian Museum, Perth. Among these was a single specimen of an undescribed species of *Leiolopisma*. I discovered this specimen in 1976 during the course of an examination of the skins in the Western Australian Museum and the curator of that collection, Dr Glen Storr, has kindly allowed me to borrow the specimen in order to describe the species. The species is interesting for three reasons. First, it is only the second species of *Leiolopisma* to be discovered in Western Australia. Second, it appears to be one of the two most primitive species known in the genus (along with *L. spenceri* — see Greer 1974 and 1980). Third, it appears to form a species pair with *L. entrecasteauxii* from southeast Australia and with this species provides yet another example of speciation in a once continuously distributed mesic temperate population following the loss of connecting habitat at the head of the Great Australian Bight.

In describing the new species, I take the opportunity to publish a few personal observations on other Australian *Leiolopisma* and to offer additional evidence for dividing the Australian species into two groups (Rawlinson 1974b and 1975). I also provide an updated key to the species of *Leiolopisma* occurring on mainland Australia and Tasmania.

## METHODS

Definitions of head scales follow Taylor (1935) except that the supraciliary scale row is taken to end with the last scale contacted by both the fourth supraocular and the palpebral row. The preoculars are indicated by small dots in Figure 1.