

CURRENT RESEARCH

New Monitor Species from Indonesia

In the new issue of *Australian Journal of Zoology*, André Koch from the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum A. Koenig Bonn (ZFMK), Germany, and colleagues describe a new monitor species from Indonesia. *Varanus lirungensis* is known only from the small Talaud island

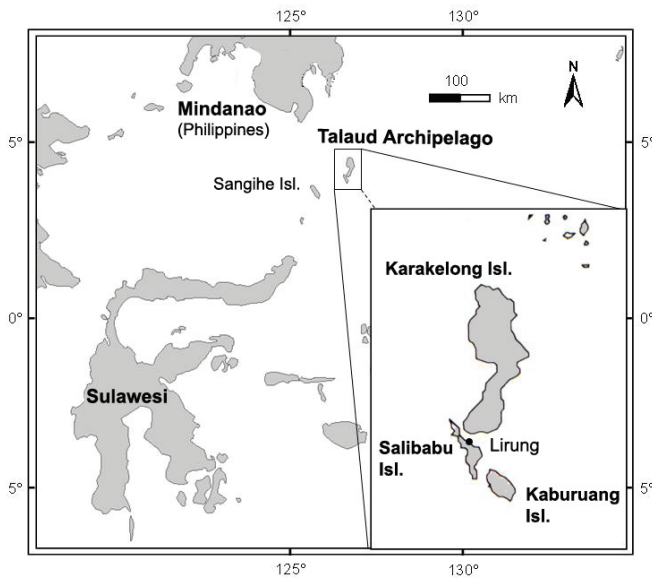


Fig. 1. Distribution of *Varanus lirungensis*

group located in the triangle between northern Sulawesi, Mindanao (Philippines) and Halmahera (Moluccas). The species name refers to the type locality near the village of Lirung on Salibabu Island (Fig. 1).

Besides molecular evidence, *V. lirungensis* is characterized/distinguished by a vivid dorsal colour pattern of yellow markings and faded dark crossbands on the ventral side (Fig. 2); a pinkish throat; hemipenis with paryphasman rows on both sides of the sulcus; and high scale counts around midbody, neck, and base of tail.

The new cryptic species represents the most north-western occurrence of a member of the Mangrove monitor species group around *V. indicus*.

Reference:

Koch, A., E. Arida, A. Schmitz, W. Böhme and T. Ziegler. 2009. Refining the polytypic species concept of Mangrove monitors (Squamata: Varanidae: *Varanus indicus* group): a new cryptic species from the Talaud Islands, Indonesia, reveals the underestimated diversity of Indo-Australian monitor lizards. *Australian Journal of Zoology* 57(1): 29-40.



Fig. 2. The male holotype of *V. lirungensis* from Salibabu Island, Talaud Archipelago. Photograph by André Koch.