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Feylinia currori GRAY, 1845 (Squamata: Scincidae): new distribution records from Kenya

PHILIPP WAGNER & ANDREAS SCHMITZ

Abstract. We report two new distribution records from Kakamega Forest for the skink species *Feylinia currori*. These findings represent the easternmost records for the species as well as the first record of the genus and species for Kenya.

Key words: Reptilia, Squamata, Scincidae, *Feylinia currori*, new record, distribution, Kenya.

The African skink genus *Feylinia* contains six small (semi-)fossorial species (*boulengeri*, *currori*, *elegans*, *grandisquamis*, *macrolepis*, *polylepis*) which inhabit forest, woodland and moist savanna areas of West and Central Africa. While one species, *Feylinia*

polylepis, is endemic to Principé island, the others are distributed in central Africa. The species *Feylinia boulengeri* has been listed for Tunisia (UETZ 2005) but this seems to be based on a confusion with *Sphenops boulengeri*, since the type locality of *F. boulengeri* is

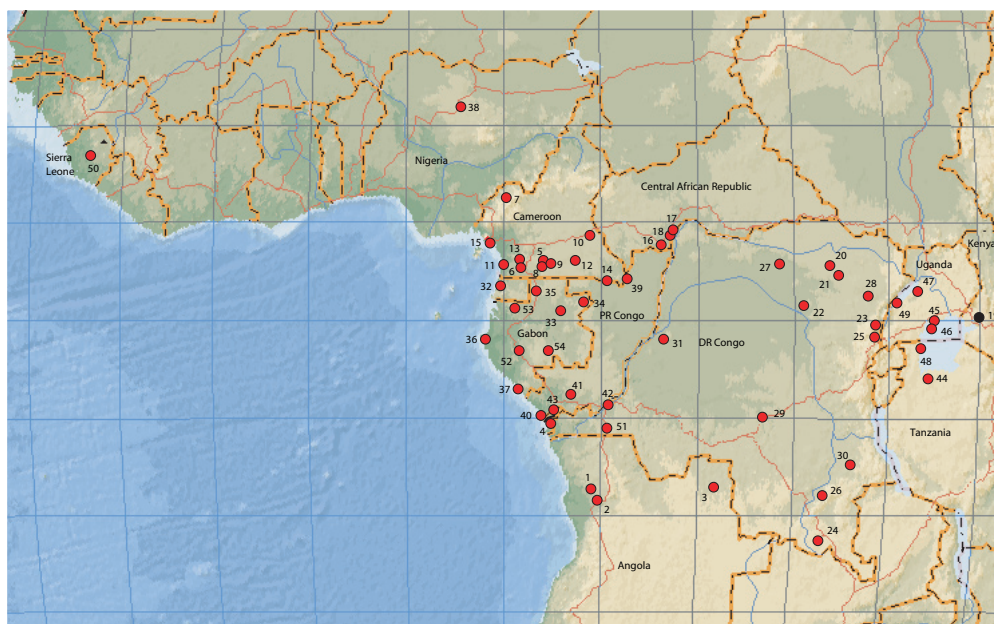


Fig. 1. Map showing known localities for *Feylinia currori*: 1, Roca Novo Duru (ZMH Ro 1758-62); 2, Golungo Alto (BM 1904.5.2.63); 3, Congolo (BM 1936.8.1.637); 4, Chiloango (NMW 10664); 5, Meyo (SMF 52541); 6, Foulassi (SMF 52542); 7, Wum (BM 1950.1.1.83); 8, Sangmelima (NMW 10666); 9, Bitye (NMW 10665); 10, Distr. Batouri (BM 1937.1.1.24); 11, Kribi (BM 1902.11.12.24); 12, Dist. Lomié (BM 1937.12.1.61); 13, Lolodorf (FMNH 26336); 14, Molundu (SMF 16082); 15, Victoria (=Limba) (ZFMK 26660); 16, Boukoko (MHNP 8632); 17, Env. Bangui (ZFMK 33643); 18, Bangui résidentiel (MCZ 128529); 19, Kakamega Forest (ZFMK 81998); 20, Akenge (AMNH 11294); 21, Medje (AMNH 11291); 22, Stanleyville (=Kisangani) (AMNH 11289); 23, Parc National Albert (RGMC 10458); 24, Kamondo (RGMC 13544); 25, Tschambi (RGMC 13546); 26, Parc National de l'Upemba (UM 10775); 27, Kasai, (MHNG 1229); 28, Banana (ZMA 15.525); 29, Inkongo (BM 1938.4.4.1); 30, Kiambi (RGMC 6777); 31, Bwanlanga Matali (CNMH 168840); 32, Bata MHNP 1892.16; 33, Makokou (MHNP 1973.1534); 34, Mekambo (MHNP 1973.1539); 35, Oyem (MHNP 1973.1540); 36, Ogooué (USNM 20409); 37, Majumba MHNP 1902.200; 38, Zaria (BM 1911.3.21.4); 39, Bomassa (JACKSON 2002); 40, Point Noire (MHNP 1956.105); 41, Sibiti (MHNP 1966.813); 42, Brazzaville (MHNP 1966.826); 43, Mts. du Mayombe (MHNP 1890.51); 44, Geita (SPAWLS et al. 2002); 45, Entebbe (BM 1901.6.24); 46, Sesse Islands, Victoria Nyanza (MSNG 39461); 47, Budongo (NMZB 1194); 48, Bukoba (SPAWLS et al. 2002); 49, Toro Game Reserve (USNM 206983); 50, Sierra Leone, without locality (BM R1964.12); 51, Thysville (MCZ 106990); 52, Lambaréné (MHNP 1901.541); 53, Monts de Cristal (PAUWELS et al. 2002b); 54, Massif du Chaillu (PAUWELS et al. 2002a).

given in the original description (CHABANAUD 1917) as N'Gomo at the Ogooué River in Gabon and the second known specimen also originates from the same country (BRYGOO & ROUX-ESTÈVE 1983).

The most widespread species of the genus is *Feylinia currori*. Its known distribution in West Africa is fragmentary, with two isolated records from Sierra Leone (BRYGOO &

ROUX-ESTÈVE 1983 [BM R 1964.12]) and Nigeria (BRYGOO & ROUX-ESTÈVE 1983 [BM 1911.3.21.4], SPAWLS et al. 2002). Whilst the latter authors consider the Nigerian record as valid, the identity of the specimen from Sierra Leone remains questionable (BRYGOO & ROUX-ESTÈVE 1983) and needs verification. From Cameroon *Feylinia currori* is distributed eastwards throughout the Cen-



Fig. 2. *Feylinia currori* from the Kakamega Forest, Kenya (ZFMK 81998).

tral African Republic, Gabon, the People's Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, east to Tanzania (BRYGOO & ROUX-ESTÈVE 1983, JACKSON 2002, LEBRETON 1999, SCHMIDT 1919, SPAWLS et al. 2002). The southernmost records are from Angola (GRAY 1845, HELLMICH 1957). Figure 1 shows an updated distribution for the species.

Feylinia currori is a forest, woodland and high savanna species which occurs from sea level to medium altitude (app. 1500 m a.s.l.). It is characterized by having the ocular scale in contact with the third supralabial. The reported maximum total length of the species is 36 cm (SPAWLS et al. 2002), but the average size is between 28 and 33 cm (SPAWLS et al. 2002). BRYGOO & ROUX-ESTÈVE (1983) describe the scales as smooth and in 20 to 28 rows around midbody. JACKSON (2002) found nine specimens in a very confined area (app. 3 m²) showing a variation of 22-26 midbody scales with a mean number of 24. SPAWLS et al. (2002) describe the typical color as dark-bluish grey, appearing black from a distance with lighter grey snout. Next to this typical coloration JACKSON (2002) reported specimens from Shanga River near Bomassa in the People's Republic of Congo with a pale,

periwinkle blue coloration. This blue coloration is certainly an artifact due to a specimen about to shed (W. BRANCH pers. comm.).

First records of *Feylinia currori* from Kenya: ZFMK 81998 (Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig) (see fig. 2), and NMK L/2662 (National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi). Both specimens collected by the senior author at the Buyangu area (00°20'N, 34°51'E) of the Kakamega Forest (Western Province: Kakamega District) in May 2003. These are the easternmost localities of *Feylinia currori* and represent the first records of the genus and this species for Kenya.

The specimen ZFMK 81998 was found in the Buyangu area crossing a forest road (app. 16:00 h; 32 °C) near the park gate. The second one (NMK L/2662) was collected in the same general area in the leaf litter near a pitfall trap (app. 10:30 h). The total length of the two specimens is 170.7 mm and 257.7 mm, respectively. We counted 26-24-24 scales around midbody in ZFMK 81998 and 24-25-24 in NMK L/2662, which agrees with previously published data. Both individuals show the typical bluish-grey metallic color (SPAWLS et al. 2002) and the morphological

traits distinctive for *F. currori* are consistent with the published records for the species.

Kakamega Forest is a fragment of the Congo-Guinean forest belt and it is a typical tropical highland rainforest, with an annual precipitation of approximately 2000 mm (ROUND-TURNER 1994) distributed in two rainy seasons (March to June, November to December). The Buyangu area of Kakamega Forest is protected as a National Reserve. Theoretically, human utilization of the forest (e.g. collection of fire wood) is not allowed, but still takes place in a daily manner. However, human impact on this part of the forest occurs on a much smaller scale than in other unprotected areas of the Kakamega Forest. Generally, the degree of disturbance varies from absent to moderate in the different parts of the forest, and it is therefore not surprising that the amphibian and reptile fauna of the Kakamega Forest is possibly impoverished. Up to date only 27 frog species (SCHICK et al. 2005) and 58 reptile species (WAGNER 2004) have been identified within the boundaries of the forest reserve.

A conspicuously high number of amphibian and reptile species have their easternmost distribution record in the Kakamega Forest (WAGNER 2004). The two new records from Kakamega Forest show that *Feylinia currori* occurs in forest habitats, so that *F. currori* can be defined as a forest dependent and forest edge species. This is also supported by the findings of PAUWELS et al. (2002a, b) and the species' distribution (see fig. 1).

The distribution pattern of the species shows similarities to other mid-altitude and forest adapted species, like e.g. *Adolfus jacksoni* (KÖHLER et al. 2003). This supports the hypothesis of a subsequent colonization of the lower Congo basin by numerous different species after the end of the dry periods of the early Pleistocene. It seems that *Feylinia currori* survived the dry periods of the Pleistocene in the area of the rainforest refugia and in the surrounding moist habitats. If this is the case, it would give an explanation for the fragmentation of the species distribution

records, which appear to be split into a western and an eastern range by the Congo basin, and which seem only to be connected in the southern and northern parts of the latter as a result of a post-Pleistocene expansion.

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On the status of *Malacochersus tornieri* (SIEBENROCK, 1903) in Zambia

WILBROAD CHANSA & PHILIPP WAGNER

Abstract. The pancake tortoise *Malacochersus tornieri* is recorded for the first time from north-eastern Zambia. A two weeks study was carried out during the rainy season 2003 in hilly areas with kopjes (rocky outcrops), which are typical habitats for the pancake tortoise. Sixty-eight (66+2) individuals were sighted, captured, marked by toe clipping and released. Only two individuals were captured twice.

Key words. Chelonia, Testudinae, *Malacochersus tornieri*, distribution, Zambia.

The range of the pancake tortoise, *Malacochersus tornieri* (SIEBENROCK, 1903), as described in CITES Appendix II, was thought to be restricted to Tanzania and Kenya (e.g. KLEMENS & MOLL 1995, SPAWLS et al. 2002). However, WANDERA (2000 in litt. to IUCN)

suggested the species might also occur in Mozambique and Zambia and justifies this with the high numbers of exports of the species reported by CITES from these non-range states (CITES COP 11). However it seems to be that an assignment of the high numbers of