

Rough-scaled Sun Skink *Eutropis rugifera* (plain morph) at Panti Forest, Peninsular Malaysia

Nick BAKER
nbaker@ecologyasia.com

Observer: Nick Baker.
Photographs by: Nick Baker.
Subject identified by: Nick Baker.

Location: Gunung Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.
Elevation: 30 metres.
Habitat: Freshwater swamp forest.
Date and time: 25 November 2016, 10:26 hrs.

Identity of subject: Rough-scaled Sun Skink, *Eutropis rugifera* (Reptilia: Sauria: Scincidae).

Description of record: A specimen with an estimated snout-vent length of 3 cm was seen emerging from beneath thick, streamside leaf litter in an area of freshwater swamp forest. It flattened its body perpendicular to the sun (Fig. 1), and then basked in direct sunlight for 6 minutes before moving back under the leaf litter. The specimen lacked the 5-7 pale dorsal and dorsolateral stripes which are typical of *Eutropis rugifera*.



Fig. 1.

© Nick Baker

Remarks: The features which identify this skink as *Eutropis rugifera* are (i) dorsal scales which bear 5 or 6 well-developed keels (Fig. 1. inset), (ii) robust, somewhat flattened body and (iii) a small head, barely distinct from the neck.

Eutropis rugifera is a widespread species of skink in Peninsular Malaysia but, based on personal experience, it appears to be somewhat uncommon. The existence of a localised plain morph of this species was documented by Grismer (2011) in Gunung Panti Forest Reserve, who described it as 'unicolor brown'. The example shown here was found in an area of freshwater swamp forest, which is one of its known habitats (Grismer, 2011).

The anterior dorsal surface of this example is partly brown and partly greenish-grey, while the posterior dorsal surface is plain brown. The tail bears typical colour and patterning for the species i.e. brown, with numerous narrow, dark bars (and behind each dark bar there is a thin or broken, pale bar).

References:

Grismer, L. L. (2011). *Lizards of Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, and their Adjacent Archipelagos. Their Description, Distribution, and Natural History*. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main. 728 pp.