

## Cameron Highlands Forest Skink *Sphenomorphus cameronicus* at Fraser's Hill, Peninsular Malaysia

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**Photograph by:** Law Ing Sind.

**Subject identified by:** Law Ing Sind, L. Lee Grismer.

**Location:** Fraser's Hill, Pahang, Peninsular Malaysia.

**Elevation:** 1200 metres.

**Habitat:** Swampy, waterlogged area near lower montane, primary forest.

**Date and time:** 12 March 2017, 23:52 hrs.

**Identity of subject:** Cameron Highlands Forest Skink, *Sphenomorphus cameronicus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Scincidae)

**Description of record:** A single individual, with an estimated snout-vent length of 5.5 cm, was found amongst sparse leaf litter in a wet, shallow roadside ditch with a rocky, man-made wall running alongside it. The ditch was adjacent to a small swampy waterlogged area with clear water. Upon being discovered the skink remained motionless. A Dusky Wolf Snake *Lycodon albofuscus* was subsequently found just 1 metre away from this skink.



Fig. 1 :

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**Remarks:** The features which identify this skink as *Sphenomorphus cameronicus*, and which serve to distinguish the species from other *Sphenomorphus* at Fraser's Hill, are (i) a distinct, dark, dorsolateral stripe extending from the posterior margin of the eye to the anterior portion of the tail (bordered dorsally by a bright copper stripe), (ii) limbs of moderate size, (iii) a long tail (around 2 times snout-vent length), (iv) coppery brown dorsal surface of head and body and (v) dark brown to black colouration of the tail.

*Sphenomorphus cameronicus* was first described in 1924 (Smith, 1924). As of 2011, the species was still unknown outside Cameron Highlands (Grismer, 2011). Since 2011, and prior to this new record, an example of the species was observed crossing a road at Fraser's Hill (L. L. Grismer, pers. comm.) but no photographs were taken. The image presented here appears to be the first acquired at Fraser's Hill.

The presence of this skink at Fraser's Hill confirms a south-easterly range extension of around 100 km from the approximate location of the holotype (Lipis District, Cameron Highlands).

It is possible that the skink had been disturbed by the presence of the Dusky Wolf Snake *Lycodon albofuscus* found nearby, and had fled in the direction of the ditch. *Lycodon albofuscus* has been previously recorded at Fraser's Hill (Evan Quah, pers. comm.).

**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.

Smith, M.A. (1924). Two new lizards and a new tree frog from the Malay Peninsula. *J. Fed. Malay. St. Mus.*, Singapore, 11:183-186.