



## Further comments on the systematic status of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839)

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The Vosmer's Writhing Skink *Lygosoma vosmaerii* was described as *Hagrii vosmaerii* by Gray (1839), as is presently accepted, with Java as type locality based on the specimen sent to him by M. Bibron (Gray 1874). Dumeril & Bibron (1839) provided a full description of the same specimen collected by M. Lamarre-Piquot from Bengal Province (with out any specific locality) as *Campsodactylus lamarrei*. Later, Boulenger (1887) allocated it to the genus *Lygosoma* and assigned 'Deccan' as its type locality and finally Boulenger (1890) considered it as synonymy.

After the description, there was no new information on the species, but subsequent herpetologists accepted it as distinct taxa (Smith 1935; Sarma 2002), except Vyas (2001) who questioned its taxonomic status on the basis of an anomalous specimen of *L. lineata*. Also, Das (2003) did not mention it in the list of reptiles of India. But recent published note on 'Rediscovery of Vosmer's Writhing Skink *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839) (Reptilia: Scincidae) with a note on its taxonomy' by Seetharamaraju et al. (2009) stated that the species' taxonomic status is valid. Here I take the opportunity to comment on the systematic status of the *L. vosmerii* (Gray 1839) and address it as a debatable subject.

Seetharamaraju et al. (2009) were able to collect a second specimen (NHM.OU.REP.1-2009) of the species, after 170 years of description, and there was no doubt in its identification. But Boulenger (1890) mentioned it as an anomalous specimen and Vyas (2001 & 2009), treated the *L. vosmaerii* as an anomalous specimen of *L. lineata* on the basis of a specimen from Gujarat, which has five fingers in right forelimb. Also, it is a fact, that this was an anomalous specimen of *L. lineata*, as it was found along with other few live specimens of *L. lineata*. On that ground, Vyas (2001) considered and treated anomalous specimen as a species belonging to *L. lineata*, instead of an anomalous specimen of *L. vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839).

Therefore, Vyas' (2001) proposal is not rejectable at this juncture, however, the present rediscovery of *L. vosmerii* (Seetharamaraju et al. 2009) considerably supports the validity of the taxon (albeit on the basis of a single specimen). But still the taxonomic status of *L. vosmerii* is questionable on the basis

of the voucher (BNHM 1453) from Velavadar National Park, Bhavanagar District, Gujarat (Vyas 2001) and this clearly suggests further debate on the taxonomic status of *L. vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839).

Therefore I personally propose and believe that the present taxonomic status of *L. vosmerii* is still uncertain/ pending and needs further investigation of the area of Jaggayapet, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh for establishing the systematic status of the species by collection and examination of a series of specimens; for it can be revealed by genetic studies only.

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