

# NOVITATES ZOOLOGICAE.

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*(WITH FIFTEEN PLATES.)*

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## REPTILES FROM RIO DE ORO, WESTERN SAHARA.

BY DR. A. GÜNTHER, F.R.S.

THE Tring Museum has received last year a small collection of reptiles made by Mr. Riegenbach in the littoral district of the Rio de Oro. The physical features of this district are more fully described by Mr. Riegenbach, and therefore it may suffice to mention here that the "Rio de Oro" is a marine channel separating a peninsula bearing the same name from the mainland, which for some distance inland is a barren, sandy desert, without any vegetation. It was here where the following eight species were collected.

1. *Geckonia chazaliae*.Mocquard, *Bull. Mus. d'Hist. Nat. Paris* i. 1895. p. 311.

This singular Gecko seems to be one of the most characteristic forms of the Reptilian Fauna of this part of Africa. It is a true desert form, reminding us of *Phrynosoma* by its form and coloration, and particularly by the row of enlarged tubercles which borders the back of the head. It was described in 1895 by M. Mocquard from a specimen obtained 20 kilometers inland of Cape Blanco—that is, somewhat more to the north than our specimens, in typical desert country. To M. Mocquard's description I have only to add that in our specimens the median lower labial scute is conspicuously longer than broad, without separating the pair of small chin-shields. The largest of several individuals is 82 mm. long, of which the tail takes 30 mm. In the perfect state the tail is tapering, slightly depressed at the base, annulated, covered with very small scales, and armed with two longitudinal series of pointed projecting tubercles along the side, the upper series being composed of the largest. Each annulus is armed with one pair of tubercles.

2. *Stenodactylus sthenodactylus* Licht.3. *Tropicolotes tripolitanus* Ptrs.4. *Varanus griseus* Daud.5. *Acanthodactylus scutellatus aureus* subsp. nov.

A considerable number of this species were collected, and therefore it seems to be the most common Lizard in this district. Specimens of this widely distributed species differ greatly in the form of the snout. Although the snout is generally conspicuously narrower than in the allied *A. pardalis*, individuals do occur, especially in the eastern localities, in which the snout is almost as wide as, and not much longer than, in typical *A. pardalis*. The greatest degree of attenuation has been attained by the snout of specimens from the westernmost limit of the

range of the species. In Morocco and Western Algeria no individuals are found with a broad snout. Sometimes the snout is so much compressed that the canthi rostrales are slightly concave, instead of straight lines.

In all the specimens which I have examined from localities from Syria to Algeria, the series of upper labials (to below the centre of the orbit) is composed of five, and exceptionally six, scutes; whilst in the specimens from the western limits of the range of the species, this number is reduced to four by the coalescence of the two posterior scutes, one very long scute bordering the lip below the anterior



*A. s. aureus.*



*Typical form.*

half of the eye. Coalescence or division of labial shields is in Lizards of such common occurrence that taxonomic value is scarcely ever attached to it. Yet it seems to be worthy of notice that of more than thirty specimens from the Rio de Oro, and of several from Southern Algeria (Lataste coll.), **every one** has an undivided fourth labial; whilst in all from more western localities I have found that shield divided into two subequal halves. To draw attention to this peculiarity I have named the western form *aureus*.

*eastern*

#### 6. *Macroprotodon cucullatus*.

Three specimens, agreeing in having 19 rows of scales, and in being nearly uniformly coloured, with very small spots on the back, and unspotted abdomen.

#### 7. *Psammophis schokari* Forsk.

#### 8. *Coelopeltis monspessulana* Herm.

