

The description of the first rock-dwelling species of butterfly lizard *Leiolepis* Cuvier, 1829 (Squamata, Agamidae) from the Khorat Plateau in northeastern Thailand

ABSTRACT

A new species of rock-dwelling *Leiolepis* is described from the Khorat Plateau in northeastern Thailand. *Leiolepis glaurung* sp. nov. can be differentiated from all other sexual species of *Leiolepis* by a combination of having a black gular region with a wide medial yellow stripe, a yellow ventrum with black mottling, bright red to orange subcaudal coloration, having reduced to no expandable flanks, and having only one black transverse bar on the flanks. This is the first rocky habitat-adapted *Leiolepis*. *Leiolepis glaurung* sp. nov. demonstrates numerous ecological adaptations to survive in these rocky habitats. *Leiolepis* are known for their expandable flanks with bright display colors, however *Leiolepis glaurung* sp. nov. has reduced or no ability to expand its flanks. We hypothesize this is an adaptation to reduce their body diameter to better fit into smaller rocky burrows unlike the larger and deeper burrows constructed in looser soils by other *Leiolepis* species. This discovery increases the number of *Leiolepis* species in Thailand to six, and worldwide to 11.