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Fiacummingea a new genus of Australian skink.

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ABSTRACT

As of 2018, the genus-level arrangement of Australian skinks is largely resolved.

Molecular studies in the post year 2000 period have consistently validated the generic arrangements and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985) as well as more recent works by Richard Wells such as Wells (2009).

In spite of attempts by a gang of thieves known as the Wüster gang, to stop widespread adoption of the Wells and Wellington taxonomy and their ICZN rules compliant nomenclature (as detailed by Hoser 2015a-f), the lies and deception do have a limited shelf life and so more and more supposedly unnamed clades of Australian skinks are being recognized by herpetologists as distinct biological entities.

Following on from this has been general adoption and use of the so-called Wells and Wellington names, and other available names, as often first used in recent times by Wells and Wellington in 1984 and 1985.

An audit of the Australian skinks found that one divergent lineage had been placed erroneously in the genus *Concinnia* Wells and Wellington, 1984 and should in fact be placed within a monotypic genus of its own.

This paper therefore places the species *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992, most recently placed in the genus *Concinnia* by Cogger (2014) into the new genus, *Fiacummingea gen. nov.*.

Keywords: Taxonomy; nomenclature; Australia; Queensland; Bartle Frere; skink; Richard Wells, Ross Wellington; *Eulamprus*; *Concinnia*; *frerei*; new genus; *Fiacummingea.*

INTRODUCTION

As of 2018, the genus-level arrangement of Australian skinks is largely resolved.

Molecular studies in the post year 2000 period have consistently validated generic arrangements and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985) as well as more recent works by Wells such as Wells (2009).

This is a noteworthy state of affairs noting the extremely vocal opposition to the taxonomy and nomenclature of Richard Wells and Cliff Ross Wellington when first published in 1984 and 1985 (Wells and Wellington, 1984, 1985).

In spite of attempts by a gang of thieves known as the Wolfgang Wüster gang, to stop widespread adoption of the Wells and Wellington taxonomy and nomenclature (as detailed by Hoser 2015a-f) and more recently in contempt of an Australian Federal Court enforceable settlement, these non-scientists have continued to destabilize the taxonomy and nomenclature of the said reptiles by illegally coining alternative non ICZN compliant names for the same biological entities (Alexander 2017, Pullen 2017, Riley 2017).

However, the lies and deception do have a limited shelf life and so more and more supposedly unnamed clades of Australian skinks are being recognized by herpetologists as distinct biological entities.

Following on from this has been general adoption and use of the Wells and Wellington names, including as seen in Cogger (2014) as well as the use of other first available names, as often first used in recent times by Wells and Wellington in 1984 and 1985 and similar adopted by others as is again seen in Cogger (2014).

An audit of the Australian skinks found that one divergent lineage had been placed erroneously in the genus *Concinnia* Wells and Wellington, 1984 and should in fact be placed within a monotypic genus of its own.

The species *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992, most recently placed in the genus *Concinnia* by Cogger (2014) is shown in the published phylogeny of Pyron *et al.* (2013) to be widely divergent of the type species for *Concinnia* and apparently all others in the genus.

In morphology, including colouration, the species *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992 is clearly divergent from all others in the genus *Concinnia.*

This paper therefore places the species *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992, most recently placed in the genus *Concinnia* by Cogger (2014) into the new genus, *Fiacummingea gen. nov.* as is done below.

It should be noted that unless mandated by the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999), the spelling of the genus name should not be altered in any way.

References relevant to the taxon originally described as "*Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992" include the following: Cogger (2014), Couper *et al.* (2006), Greer (1992), Pyron *et al.* (2013), Skinner *et al.* (2013), Wells (2009) and Wilson and Swan (2010). Beneath the description is a cut and paste of the text from Wells (2009) outlining his dissection of the genera *Eulamprus*

Fitzinger, 1843 and *Graphyromorphus* Wells and Wellington, 1984, indicating the generic placement of each relevant species as identified by him at the time.
As his taxonomy was based on both molecular and morphological evidence as cited within his paper, it remains broadly correct, save for the obvious erection of a new genus for a single species in this paper. It is the best available taxonomy and nomenclature for the relevant assemblage of species.
A more recent phylogeny by Pyron *et al.* (2013) also broadly confirms the Wells (2009) arrangement as correct, save for the taxon *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992, which clearly needed placement into a new genus.

FIACUMMINGEA GEN. NOV.

Type species: *Eulamprus frerei* Greer, 1992.

Diagnosis: The diagnosis for the monotypic genus genus *Fiacummingea gen. nov.* is effectively the same as for the type species.

Fiacummingea gen. nov. is separated from *Concinnia* Wells and Wellington, 1984, as well as other genera named by Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985) or Wells (2009), the relevant ones identified by Wells (2009), being within *Concinnia* as defined by Cogger (2014).

Fiacummingea gen. nov. is separated from *Concinnia* Wells and Wellington, 1984, as most recently defined by Cogger (2014) by the following unique suite of characters: Palmar surfaces and subdigital lamellae are mostly unpigmented; postmental is in contact with a single infralabial on each side; the lizard has a dark, broad, lateral dark grey or grey-black zone dotted with white, with the upper flanks having blackish markings in the form of a zig-zag or merged triangles running down the length of the body and breaking up on the tail, where they are separated by brown, with lower flanks being a mottled and indistinct pattern formed by black, yellow and white scales; there are no supranasals; prefrontals are usually separated or in point contact only with the frontal being broader; the lower secondary temporal scale overlaps the upper one; there are 69-74 paravertebral scales and the eye bulge is not prominent.

Concinnia Wells and Wellington, 1984 (as defined by Cogger 2014) and *Fiacummingea gen. nov.* are separated from all other Australian skinks, by the following unique suite of characters: pentadactyle limbs; smooth scales, anterior ear lobules are absent; supranasals may be present or absent; lower eyelid is movable; parietal scales are in contact behind the interparietal; the fourth toe is much longer than the third; the base of the fourth toe is moderate with no more than two granules or lamellae between the lateral scales, and basal lamellae sometimes divided, but all distal lamellae are undivided; lower surfaces of tail and rump are not flushed with red or pink; the hindlimb is long being at least 40% of the snout-vent length; viviparous.

Distribution: Known only from the wet high altitude areas of the Mount Bartle Frere summit in far north Queensland.

Conservation status: There are no known causes of decline or threat and all wild animals are within a reserve. However potential climate change or other human induced change may adversely affect this otherwise vulnerable species.

If one or more government-owned or supported zoos gets hold of this taxon and seeks to maximize their short term commercial gain by being the only facility with the species, they may deliberately orchestrate extermination in the wild so as to maximize the "endangered species value" of their holdings. Such a scenario has happened in the past with government-owned zoos, including in relation to the following species, Tasmanian Tiger *Thylacinus cynocephalus* (Harris, 1808), Leadbeater's Possum *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri* McCoy, 1867, and Pygmy Bluetongue *Lazarusus adelaidensis* (Peters, 1863).

In the case of the first of this trio, four government-owned zoos, namely Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide and Taronga (in Sydney), held a closely guarded monopoly on ownership of live Tasmanian Tigers for some decades, and at the same time the zoo's controlled departments enforcing wildlife laws, systematically exterminated specimens in the wild.

They even paid people to seek out and kill the last remaining specimens in the wild!

This drove the general public to pay their money to see live specimens at these zoos, as there was nowhere else to see them.

Extinction in the wild, further improved the short term commercial position of the zoos that held them, but the zoos were in fact unable to successfully maintain their captive populations or breed them to anything approaching replacement level.

As a result, the last Tasmanian Tiger cash cow held at a government-owned zoo died a sad and tragic death at Hobart Zoo in 1937.

Since the 1980's "Zoo's Victoria"(owner of the Melbourne, Healesville and Werribee Zoos) has been running a similar policy with the Victorian Faunal Emblem, the Leadbeater's Possum, which they hold a closely guarded monopoly on holding.

To see them, people must pay the Zoo's Victoria business to see them. Privately held specimens were forcibly repatriated to Zoos Victoria more than 20 years ago,

Meanwhile, all wild specimens, which happen to live entirely in Wildlife Department controlled land, are also being systematically exterminated to ensure that the commercial value of their Zoos Victoria held animals is maximized.

Over a 20 year period to 2017, the wild population has been decimated by two thirds by the deliberate extermination policies of the State Wildlife Department (who own and control Zoo's Victoria) and the associated government-owned "Vicforests" business (Borschmann 2017), while Zoo's Victoria have been singularly unsuccessful in maintaining captive colonies of this species, which notably had not been a problem when specimens were held in private (non-government) hands.

For the Pygmy Bluetongue, thought to be extinct and then rediscovered in the early 1990's, the government controlled Adelaide Zoo, quickly established a monopoly on holding the species, meaning that the only way for people to see them was to pay their money to the zoo.

The "recovery" program run by the zoo, was exactly not that. In fact it was to ensure that few if any were bred to ensure that none would ever fall into the hands of rivals in the wildlife business space and therefore maintain the Adelaide Zoo monopoly on ownership of the species.

The "recovery" program has in fact been a huge commercial success for the Adelaide Zoo in that they have successfully not bred the species and ensured it remains so rare in captivity that only the Adelaide Zoo holds them and people must still pay to see them at this zoo.

Fortunately for that species at least, its cryptic habit of hiding down spider holes across a significant geographical range, means that it is in fact far more abundant than ever originally suspected in the 1990's, when rediscovered.

Therefore any orchestrated government program to exterminate the species in the wild is unlikely to succeed.

Because of the small size of the species and ease of transport, it is only matter of when and not if, some German, American or other interested foreigner smuggles a few out of Australia, breeds them like all other Blutongued lizards and makes them a common household pet within a few years in every part of the world, except Australia.

Australia of course is where the government and their Adelaide Zoo business, will cling to the commercially motivated dream that they alone should be allowed to hold the species and make money from it.

Etymology: Named in honour of investigative journalist Fia Cumming, of Lyons in the ACT, Australia in recognition of her immense contribution to wildlife conservation in Australia as detailed in Hoser (1996).

GENERIC ARRANGEMENT OF *EULAMPRUS* FITZINGER, 1843 AND *GLAPHYROMORPHUS* WELLS AND WELLINGTON, 1984 AS PUBLISHED BY WELLS (2009).

"The genus *Eulamprus* Fitzinger, 1843 is restricted to the *quoyii* complex of species -

Eulamprus heatwolei Wells and Wellington, 1984; *Eulamprus herseyi* Wells and Wellington, 1985; *Eulamprus marnieae* Hutchinson and Rawlinson, 1995 *stat. nov.*; *Eulamprus quoyii* (Dumeril and Bibron, 1839); and *Eulamprus tympanum* (Lonnberg and Andersson, 1913).

The genus *Concinnia* Wells and Wellington, 1984 is restricted to the *tenuis* group of species -

Concinnia brachysoma (Lonnberg and Andersson, 1915); *Concinnia frerei* (Greer, 1992); *Concinnia martini* Wells and Wellington, 1985; *Concinnia sokosoma* (Greer, 1992); and *Concinnia tenuis* (Gray, 1831).

A new genus *Edenia* is proposed for the enigmatic *Hinulia tigrina* De Vis, 1888 - *Edenia tigrina* (De Vis, 1888) *comb. nov.*

Karma gen. nov. is proposed for the *murrayi* complex of species - *Karma murrayi* (Boulenger, 1887) *comb. nov.*; and *Karma tryoni* (Longman, 1918) *comb. nov.*

The genus *Costinisauria* Wells and Wellington, 1985 is restricted to the *kosciuskoi* group of species - *Costinisauria couperi sp. nov.* is formally described from the New England Plateau of NSW; *Costinisauria kosciuskoi* (Kinghorn, 1932); *Costinisauria leuraensis* (Wells and Wellington, 1984); and *Costinisauria worrelli* Wells and Wellington, 1985.

The genus *Deloidiogenes* Wells and Wellington, 1985 is restricted to a single species -

Deloidiogenes amplus (Covacevich and McDonald, 1980).

Magmellia gen. nov. is proposed for *luteilateralis* - *Magmellia luteilateralis* (Covacevich and McDonald, 1980) *comb. nov.*

The genus *Glaphyromorphus* Wells and Wellington, 1984 is now restricted to include only *Glaphyromorphus clandestinus* Hoskin and Couper, 2004*, and Glaphyromorphus punctulatus* (Peters, 1871).

The genus *Mawsoniascincus* Wells and Wellington, 1985 is restricted to the *isolepis* complex of species - *Mawsoniascincus brongersmai* (Storr, 1972); *Mawsoniascincus douglasi* (Storr, 1967); *Mawsoniascincus foresti* (Kinghorn, 1932); *Mawsoniascincus harwoodi* (Wells and Wellington, 1985 *comb. nov.*; *Mawsoniascincus isolepis* (Boulenger, 1887).

A new genus, *Serenitas* is erected for the *pardalis* complex - *Serenitas fuscicaudis* (Greer, 1979) *comb. nov.*; *Serenitas nigricaudis* (Macleay,1877) *comb. nov.;* and *Serenitas pardalis* (Macleay, 1877) *comb. nov.*

The genus *Opacitascincus* Wells and Wellington, 1985 is restricted to the *crassicaudus* complex of species - *Opacitascincus arnhemicus* (Storr, 1967); *Opacitascincus cracens* (Greer, 1985) *comb. nov.*; *Opacitascincus crassicaudus* (Dumeril and Dumeril, 1851); *Opacitascincus darwiniensis* (Storr, 1967); and *Opacitascincus pumilus* (Boulenger, 1887) *comb. nov.*

The genus *Patheticoscincus* Wells and Wellington, 1984 is used for its sole included species -

Patheticoscincus gracilipes (Steindachner, 1870) *comb. nov.*

Rhiannodon gen. nov. is proposed for a single species *Rhiannodon mjobergi* (Lonnberg and Andersson, 1915) *comb. nov.*."

Note: Wells (2009) provides an extensive diagnosis of each genus he has defined and adopted.

SUMMARY OF THE SINGLE SPECIES WITHIN *FIACUMMINGEA GEN. NOV.* AS DETAILED BY WELLS 2009.

"***Concinnia frerei*** (Greer, 1992)

Eulamprus frerei Greer, 1992 - Rec. Aust. Mus. 44(1): 7-19 [p.16-18]. Type data: Holotype QM J47985 . Type Locality: summit of Mount Bartle-Frere, Qld.

Eulamprus frerei Cogger, 2000 - Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia

Eulamprus frerei Wilson and Swan, 2003 - Complete Guide to Reptiles of Australia [p. 218-219]

Eulamprus frerei Wilson, 2005 - Field Guide Rept. Qld [p.124]

Eulamprus frerei Wilson and Swan, 2008 - Complete Guide to Reptiles of Australia 2nd Edition [p. 234-235]

Description: The base body colour is a dark reddish-brown to greyish-brown over the dorsum with a pattern of small, blackish transversely aligned bars or cross-bands. The nuchal area lacks the dark midline streak of some other species of *Concinnia*. The side of the head and body is dominated by a dark pattern of black speckles, blotches and bars that collectively create a broad black zigzag pattern along the upper lateral zone, and a faintly to heavily speckled lower lateral; the base colour on the lateral of the body becomes progressively paler towards the ventrolateral margin, so the collective dark markings on a pale base create a highly disruptive pattern when this species is active on lichen covered boulders. The tail has a series of small blackish blotches along the sides, that may be separate to form transversely aligned banding over the tail (though faint on the dorsal surface) or coalesce to form an irregular line of blotching and speckling along almost the entire side of the tail. The ventral surface of the body is pale greenish, the lips are darkly barred, and the chin-shields edged with brown. The subdigital lamellae are pale brown, whereas the rest of the *tenuis* complex has very darkly pigmented subdigital lamellae. This northern member of the *tenuis* complex is immediately distinguished from most of its congenors by its temporal scale condition. In *C. frerei* the lower secondary temporal scale overlaps the upper, whereas in *C. tenuis* and all other except *C. martini*, the reverse condition occurs, where the upper secondary temporal scale overlaps the lower. Other significant features of this species' morphology are: midbody scales in 32-35 rows; paravertebrals 69-74; nasals separated; prefrontals separated; supraoculars 4; supralabials usually 7; nuchals 6-7; supraciliaries 8; presuboculars 2; supralabials 7 (5th subocular); postmental in contact with first two infralabials on each side;ear-opening conspicuous; limbs pentadactyl and well-developed, overlapping when adpressed; 4th toe subdigital lamellae 24-27, smooth to bluntly keeled, and divided basally. It reaches a maximum length of only around 160mm (snout-vent length of around 65mm).

Distribution: Known only from a small area in the vicinity of the summit of Mount Bartle-Frere, in north-eastern Queensland.

Habitat: Inhabits cool, damp situations amongst lichen-covered granite boulders in a relativelysmall area of rock outcroppings with a vegetation cover of stunted heath, and mossy tropical rainforest. The habitat on this mountain summit is often heavily clouded, very windy and misty.

Biology/Ecology: This is a small, semi-arboreal and saxatile skink that is rarely observed.

Specimens have been located during daylight in both rock crevices and the cracks of logs. It feeds only on small invertebrates and presumably produces live young, but nothing has been recorded on its reproductive biology.

Survival Status: Protected under the Qld Nature Conservation Act (1992) [see also the Qld Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation Act (1994)] [see also the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation Act (1994)], and generally considered to be rare, given its very restricted distribution.

Etymology: The name *'frerei'* refers to the Type Locality of Mount Bartle Frere, Qld."

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no known conflicts of interest in terms of this paper and conclusions within.