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A new record of *Stenodactylus affinis* (Murray 1884) (Sauria: Gekkonidae) from Bandar-e-Abbas, Hormozgan Province, Southern Iran

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During field work in southern Iran in March 2011 one adult female (gravid) *Stenodactylus affinis* was collected in the early morning from a hard-packed salt substrate with sparse vegetation on the road from Bandar-e-Abbas to Minab (N 27º 17', E 56º 28') at an elevation of 8 m below sea level. It was syntopic with *Acanthodactylus blanfordi* and *Bunopus tuberculatus*.

The genus *Stenodactylus* (Fitzinger, 1826) is one of the gekkonid taxa that originated from the Afro-Arabian plate. The divergence in *Stenodactylus* is deep and dates back to several million years ago, probably in the Miocene (Fujita and Papenfuss, 2011). Geological events, such as the formation of the Red Sea during the Miocene, separated populations of *Stenodactylus* in Africa and Arabia. According to Fujita and Papenfuss (2011) the genus *Tropiocolotes* nested within *Stenodactylus* clade on an individual gene tree which make the genus *Stenodactylus* as paraphyletic genus. Hass (1957) using distinct morphological characters, described this species as the sole member of a new genus, *Pseudoceramodactylus khobarensis*. Based on their molecular data, Fujita and Papenfuss (2011) therefore resurrected *Pseudoceramodactylus*. Recently, this taxon has been reported from Qeshm Island, Iran (Dakhteh et al., 2007).

The distribution of *Stenodactylus* sensu stricto is from northern Africa, south to northern Kenya, and from the Middle East eastward to southeastern Iran (Anderson, 1999; Krysko et al., 2007; Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2007). The narrow-fingered geckonid lizards of the genus *Stenodactylus* (Fitzinger, 1826) consist of 12 species (Arnold, 1980b; Fujita and Papenfuss, 2011), of which two species have been documented from Iran (Anderson, 1999; Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2007, 2008). up to now, *Stenodactylus affinis* is distributed in Khuzestan and Bushehr provinces in Iran (Anderson, 1999). In March 2011, we found one specimen of *Stenodactylus affinis* in Hormozgan province on the road from Bandar-e-Abbas to Minab in the early morning in a cloudy condition (Fig. 1). The vegetation of the area is sparse, including *Artiplex, Artemisia* shrubs and *Tamarix* tree on a hard-packed salt substrate (Fig. 2).

Prior to this study, three records of occurrence of *Stenodactylus affinis* have been documented in Iran (Anderson, 1999; Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2007, 2008). These records were from Ahvaz, Aghajari and Tangestan, all located in southwestern Iran (Khuzistan and Bushehr Provinces) (Fig. 3). We found our newly-recorded specimen (presented here) in southern Iran, Hormozgan province on the road from Bandar-e-Abbas to Minab (70-75 km to Minab) (N 27° 17'; E 056° 28'). This is the

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easternmost record for *Stenodactylus affinis*. The locality of our specimen is about 550 km further east from the previously known localities in southwestern Iran (Fig. 3).

Our single collected specimen is now deposited at the Hakim Sabzevari University Zoological Museum (HSUZM) with the SUHC 840 voucher number (). The measurements (in mm) and scalation characters of this specimen are as follows: snout-vent length (SVL): 61.3; tail length (TL): 34; axilla-groin distance: 32; forelimb length: 26.1; hindlimb length: 30.2 ; head height: 9.3; head length: 17; head width: 14; number of supralabials (right side): 12 ; number of infralabials (right side): 12; number of abdominal scales across middle of belly: 64; number of lamellae under the 4th finger: 21; number of lamellae under the 4th toe: 27; number of scales between eyes in the widest region: 40 .

Further study and more extensive field work in southern regions of the Iranian Plateau will obviously yield more material from the distribution areas of this species and could shed more light on various aspects of the biology and natural history of this lizard.

FIGURE 1. *Stenodactylus affinis* (SUHC -ERP 840) in natural habitat.

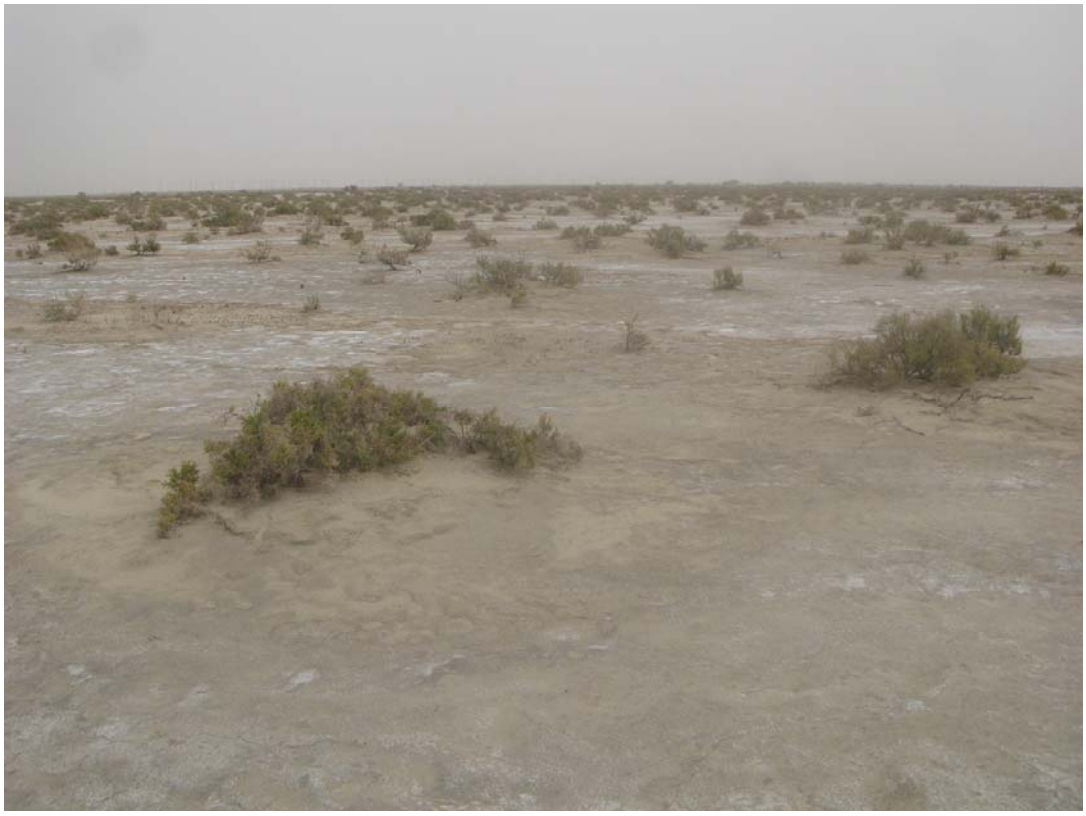

FIGURE 2. Habitat of *Stenodactylus affinis* on the road from Bandar-e-Abbas to Minab, Hormozgan Province, southern Iran.

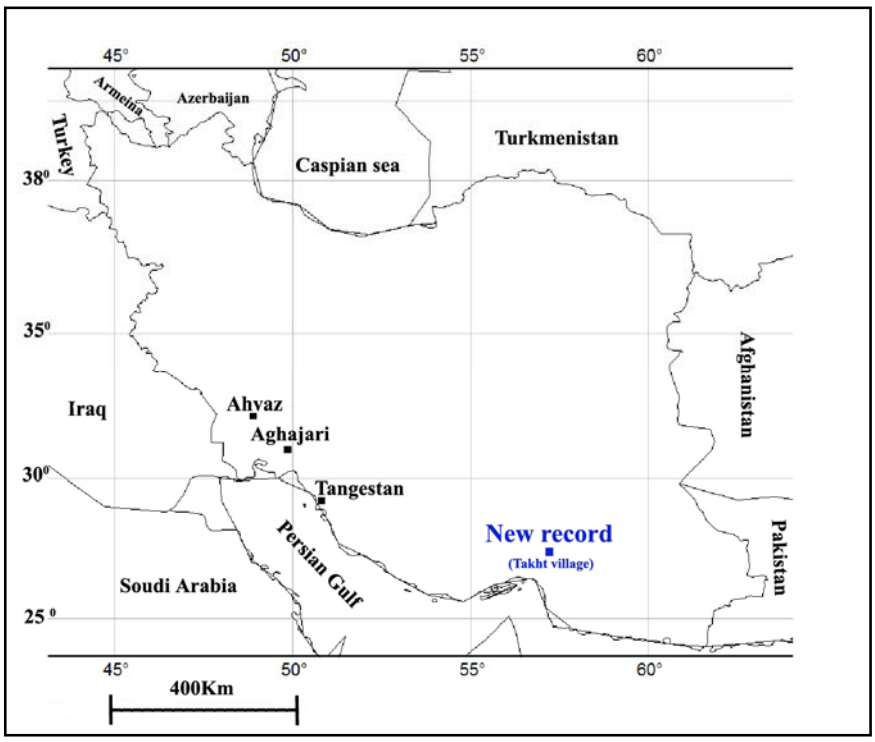

FIGURE 3. Locality of the newly-collected specimen of *Stenodactylus affinis* (blue rectangle). Note the significant distance from the previous Iranian records (Tangestan, Aghajari, Ahvaz).

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