



## Reply to 'Further comments on the systematic status of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839)' by Raju Vyas

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Reacting to the publication by Seetharamaraju et al. (2009) on the matter concerned Vyas (2010) put forward an opinion that the taxonomic status of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839) (Reptilia: Scincidae) is still a 'debatable subject'. Vyas (2010) relies greatly on the fact that Boulenger (1890) synonymized *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839) with *Lygosoma lineata* (Gray, 1839) treating the former as an 'apparently anomalous specimen' and Vyas (2001, 2009) seconded this opinion based on the observation of a specimen (BNHM 1453) from Velavadar National Park, Bhavanagar district, Gujarat. The Gujarat specimen bears five fingers in right forelimb and was collected while 'it was found along with other few live specimens of *L. lineata*' (Vyas 2001, 2010). This very fact clearly indicates that the specimen (BNHM 1453) is indeed an anomalous *Lygosoma lineata* (Gray, 1839)!

The rediscovery of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839) reported by Seetharamaraju et al. (2009) is based on a single specimen (NHM.OU.REP.1-2009) collected at Jaggayapet, Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. We could not collect or sight another specimen of either the same species or any other Lygosomine skink during careful search efforts, over 90 man-hours, conducted by us in the vicinity of the collection site. *Lygosoma lineata* (Gray, 1839) is yet to be reported from Andhra Pradesh (Sanyal et al. 1993; Srinivasulu & Das 2008).

We are of the opinion that the description of *Lygosoma vosmaerii*, based on a single specimen (holotype MNHN 777) by Gray (1839), it being distinct from *Lygosoma lineata* only in possessing five fingers, and presence of only a single specimen prompted Boulenger (1890) to consider it as an anomalous specimen of the latter. Lack of additional specimen/s of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* resulted in continuation of this confusion, though subsequent workers treated both these species as distinct (Smith 1935; Sharma 2002). Vyas (2001) attempted to clarify the taxonomic status and synonymized *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839) with *Lygosoma lineata* (Gray, 1839). In our opinion, the specimen from Gujarat, India (BNHM 1453) is indeed an anomalous *Lygosoma lineata* (Gray, 1831) and

the specimen from Jaggayapet, Andhra Pradesh is true *Lygosoma vosmaerii* as it matches the type description and also is from the region closer to the type locality.

We agree with Vyas (2010) that genetic analysis will be an important tool in resolving the true identity of these closely resembling species.

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Date of publication (online): 26 January 2010  
Date of publication (print): 26 January 2010  
ISSN 0974-7907 (online) | 0974-7893 (print)

#### Manuscript details:

Ms # o2390  
Received 22 January 2009

**Citation:** Srinivasulu, C. & M. Seetharamaraju (2010). Reply to 'Further comments on the systematic status of *Lygosoma vosmaerii* (Gray, 1839)' by Raju Vyas. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 2(1): 675.

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