

Holaspis laevis WERNER, 1896

Eastern Blue-tailed Gliding Lizard

Description: Total length about 10 cm, tail long, about 50–60% of the total. Body flattened; head long, with a pointed snout; a nuchal collar; toes long, with a ring of

flattened scales. Dorsal faces black with cream stripes along the sides; upper side of tail black with a median row of bright blue spots and yellow lateral scales; throat, chest and underside of limbs cream, belly orange in males, orange-grey in females; underside of tail black.

Range: In lowland forests along the coast. Recorded from Kaya Jibana Forest in Kilifi, Buda and Gongoni Forests in Kwale, Longo Forest-Shimba Hills National Reserve, at altitudes between 50 and 310 m.

Habits: Largely arboreal and diurnal; basking on vertical tree trunks and/or high up on trees with loose bark slabs. At Kaya Jibana, individuals were found hiding in the cracks of standing dry trunks of dead coconut palms. At some sites, for example in the Gongoni Forest, they were found to be locally common in a small area with suitable trees. These lizards do descend from their trees, are quite active, agile and hard to capture because they can leap between branches. Clutches comprise two eggs; feeding on insects and other arthropods.



Fig. 298: Eastern Blue-tailed Gliding Lizard *Holaspis laevis*, Gongoni Forest, Kwale.

P.K.MALONZA