

black; the most conspicuous is a band running from the upper part of the eye along the upper margin of the neck; sometimes it is interrupted in some part of its course, and generally a continuation of it is visible in front of the eye. A short curved band between the eye and the tympanum, another running from the lower part of the eye to below the tympanum; an oblong spot at the posterior angle of the mandible. Tympanum and posttympanic region with curved streaks and spots. Sides and lower part of the neck with parallel straight bands, posteriorly broken up into series of spots. In very young examples these ornamentations are less numerous.

2. *Trionyx sinensis*, Wieg.

Three young specimens.

3. *Tachydromus septentrionalis*, Gthr.

Numerous.

4. *Tachydromus Wolteri*, Fisch.

One specimen.

Notes on the Species of Tachydromus.

The lizards of this genus (with the exception of *T. smaragdinus*) resemble one another in general appearance so much as to induce some herpetologists to consider certain characters on which I had based the distinction of the species to be of very doubtful specific value. I think the species can be readily and with certainty distinguished; they are based on characters which in my experience are subject to only exceptional variation, and which, slight as they are, must appear significant enough when they are found to be constant in specimens from the same locality and combined with one or more similarly constant characters.

The late Dr. Stoliczka was the first to refuse specific value to the number of mental scutes and inguinal pores. In his notes on a *Tachydromus* from Sikkim (Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xli. 1872, p. 87), which he identified with the archipelagic *T. sexlineatus* and of which he had twenty-five specimens, he says that he has found four specimens with four chin-shields, the others having three, and one specimen with two inguinal pores, the others having three, four, or five. Such an amount of variation I have not found in any species, although I examined equally large numbers of individuals of several species; and in not a single species have I met

with a variation of the number of the chin-shields*. In all the numerous specimens of *T. septentrionalis* and *T. smaragdinus* the number of inguinal pores is invariable. More especially with regard to the true *T. sexlineatus*, of which I have examined some forty examples †, the number of chin-shields is invariably three and that of inguinal pores very rarely exceeds two; in three specimens (two from Borneo) I have observed one pore only.

What follows from these observations is :—

1st. That the species examined by Stoliczka differs from the other species of the genus in having a greater number of inguinal pores and, therefore, in being liable to more frequent variation in this respect.

2nd. That that species must be distinct from *T. sexlineatus* and had better be distinguished by another name—*T. sikkimensis*.

Specimens of *T. sexlineatus* from Khassya, in the British Museum, have on the whole a somewhat shorter and less tapering snout, also shorter toes than the typical form, and approach in these respects *T. meridionalis*.

This latter species has been placed by Mr. Boulenger ('Lizards,' iii. p. 4) as a synonym of *T. sexlineatus*, but besides being a less slender species, the four specimens have one inguinal pore only, like *T. septentrionalis*, in which the constancy of this character is a remarkable and incontrovertible fact.

Of the five species united by Mr. Boulenger (*l. c.* p. 5) under the name of *T. tachydromoides*, *T. septentrionalis* is the one the distinctness of which from the Japanese form or forms can be least impugned. We have now no less than twenty-seven specimens before us, a most instructive series as to the value of the characters by which this species has been defined. Only two of the specimens, from Shanghai, differ from the others in having a series of small scales intercalated between the outer pair of large scaled series. According to Stoliczka's estimate of the specific characters in *Tachydromus* these two specimens should be relegated to a distinct species; and if this peculiarity should prove to be constant in the form inhabiting that district, I myself should be inclined to separate it from *T. septentrionalis*.

Schlegel figures in the 'Fauna Japonica' his *T. tachydro-*

* One individual of *T. Wolteri* has three on one and four on the other side, which, of course, proves nothing, as in every lizard almost any two contiguous head-shields may be found abnormally confluent.

† Half of this number belong to the Museum of Genoa, having been kindly forwarded to me by the Marquis J. Doria.