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TRACHYLEPIS SECHELLENSIS (Seychelles skink): REPRODUCTION. *Trachylepis* (previously *Mabuya*) *sechellensis* is an abundant lizard species in the Seychelles. It is endemic and occurs on virtually all granitic islands, but it has also been introduced to several coral islands (Cheke, 1984; Gerlach, 2006). It is particularly common near human settlements, but quite rare

Figure 1. Three eggs of *Trachylepis sechellensis* found on the soil under a rock on the east coast of Mahé on 7th April 2006. © H. Bringsøe.



Figure 2. Three hatchlings of *Trachylepis sechellensis*, hatched and photographed on 10th April 2006. © H. Bringsøe.

in densely populated parts of the capital Victoria. Nevertheless, its biology, including reproduction, has been poorly studied.

During a visit to the Seychelles in 2006 a clutch of eggs of *T. sechellensis* was found at Anse Royale on the east coast of Mahé on 7th

Figure 3. Ventral surface of hatchling *Trachylepis sechellensis*. Notice the mark after the yolk sac. © H. Bringsøe.



April. The habitat was along the road side about 1 m from a private garden. The clutch consisted of three eggs which were situated in a slight cavity of approximately 3–6 mm on the soil under a rock (Figure 1). Their measurements were as follows: 23.2 x 16.9 mm, 23.6 x 16.7 mm, 23.7 x 17.5 mm.

The three eggs were kept temporarily in a small cloth bag. They hatched three days later, i.e. on 10th April 2006. The measurements of the hatchlings were: SVL 35 mm + tail 72 mm = total length 107 mm; SVL 36 mm + tail 74 mm = total length 110 mm; SVL 36 mm + tail 74 mm = total length 110 mm. They were released after they had been photographed (Figures 2–3).

Trachylepis sechellensis breeds throughout the year, August–October being the peak months (Brooke & Houston, 1983; Cheke, 1984). According to Brooke & Houston (1983) the clutch size of *T. sechellensis* consists of 4–6 eggs whereas Cheke (1984) mentions 2–4 eggs per clutch. It is impossible to say whether the clutch which I found, might have been bigger as it was laid.

However, no remains of egg shells were found under the rock and there was no obvious trace of predators. Most probably the eggs were considerably smaller as they were newly deposited. Hatchling size of *T. sechellensis* has so far not been documented and photographs of hatchlings have to my knowledge never been published.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Homalopsid Snakes, Evolution in the Mud

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Krieger Publishing Company,
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The subjects of this book, snakes of the family Homalopsidae, are aquatic to semi-aquatic serpents that despite fascinating adaptations to marine, brackish and fresh water and some unusual dietary habits, have received only scant and scattered attention from scientists, and except for some commercial exploitation, even less from the public. Dr. Murphy's book does an admirable job of bringing together the information that is available and presenting it in a stimulating and attractive fashion. Although containing technical

information designed for the professional biologist and naturalist, it has much to offer amateur herpetologists and interested laymen willing to learn from it. In general, the illustrations are good, many in colour.

The first section deals with the general biology of these fascinating snakes. It begins by placing the family within the framework of ophidian taxonomy and proceeds to a discussion of the adaptations of these snakes generally to an aquatic lifestyle. The section then gives a succinct, eminently readable account of the rather convoluted history of the nomenclature of what is now the family Homalopsidae, followed by an assessment of the relationship of the homalopsids to other taxa of snakes and of genera within the family, based on modern biochemical taxonomic approaches.