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A new skink of the genus *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger, 1843 described from southern Vietnam

A new forest skink of the genus *Sphenomorphus* Fitzinger, 1843 (Squamata: Scincidae) has recently been described from the high elevation forest of Mount Hon Ba, Khanh Hoa Province, eastern of Langbian Plateau of southern Vietnam. The new member of the genus *Sphenomorphus*, Yersin's Forest Skink, *S. yersini* is described based on morphological characters of four specimens and a fragment of 653 nucleotides of the gene COI. The new species most resembles *S. buenluoicus* occurring in Kon Tum-Gia Lai Plateau in morphological features but both species can be distinguished from each other by tail length ratio (longer in the new species), ventral scale row (much higher in the new species), and hemipenis shape. This new species is named in honor of the famous physician and bacteriologist, Alexandre Yersin (1863–1943), who discovered the bacterium responsible for bubonic plague. Mount Hon Ba associates with the name of Alexandre Yersin who built a research station on the top of the mountain and worked there.

This study was participated by Nguyen Thanh Luan, a scientific officer of Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC), in cooperation with other Vietnamese colleague from the Institute of Tropical Biology (Ho Chi Minh City) and international researchers from Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia) and Royal Ontario Museum (Canada).

Read more about this species on Zootaxa at <https://biotaxa.org/Zootaxa/article/view/zootaxa.4438.2.6>

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Male of *Sphenomorphus yersini*.

Photo by: Nguyen Thanh Luan – ATP/IMC



Female of *Sphenomorphus yersini*.

Photo by: Nguyen Thanh Luan – ATP/IMC



A micro-habitat of the new species in Hon Ba Nature Reserves, Khanh Hoa Province. Photo by: Nguyen Thanh Luan