

Family Lacertidae OPPEL, 1811

Genus *Takydromus* DAUDIN, 1802

Takydromus amurensis PETERS, 1881

English name: Amur grass lizard

Japanese name: アムールカナヘビ (Amūru-kanahebi)

Introductory information

This species has a broad distribution from the Russian Far East and north-eastern China through the Korean Peninsula, reaching Japan only on Tsushima Island. First described in 1881, it is the only *Takydromus* species naturally occurring on Tsushima, where it is separated ecologically from other Japanese congeners. Slender and long-tailed, it is easily identified by its brown dorsal colouration with darker patterns and a broad lateral stripe.

Description

Size: SVL approximately 55–78 mm. TL 130–180 mm, about 230% of SVL. ToL 185–258 mm.

Femoral pores: Typically, four per side on Kami-Tsushima Island; usually three per side in Korea and southern Primorsky Krai, Russia.

Colour and pattern: Dorsum brown with dark brown markings. Venter white to whitish-brown with blackish-brown spots.

Lateral band: A wide dark brown stripe from the tip of the snout to the tail, and a discontinuous white line from behind the eye to the base of the tail.

Recognition

Femoral pores are typically four per side in the Tsushima population, three per side elsewhere. Dorsum brown with dark brown dorsal markings. A broad dark brown lateral band extends from the snout to the tail. The tail is longer in proportion to other lizards on Kami-Tsushima Island.

Natural history

Habitat: Floors of temperate forests, secondary woodlands, fields, mountain trails, and frequently near human habitation such as parks, stone walls, and agricultural landscapes near forest edges.



Fig. 564: Amur grass lizard, *Takydromus amurensis*, in habitat.

Reproduction: Oviparous. Females lay two clutches per season, each containing 3–8 eggs under leaf litter between April and early August. Hatchlings measure approximately 25 mm in SVL.

Diet: In captivity these lizards readily accept beetles, crickets, flies, centipedes and spiders as food.

Behaviour: Primarily diurnal and terrestrial. More active in the morning. Commonly during the day, it basks on grass, low branches, or tree trunks, or it hides under rocks, logs, or vegetation. Defensive responses include rapid retreat, caudal autotomy, and biting.

Range in Japan

Distributed widely from Kami-Tsushima of Tsushima Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture. Outside Japan it is found in the Korean Peninsula, north-eastern China, and southern Primorsky Krai, Russia.

Abundance

Locally common within its Tsushima range and does not show signs of rapid decline, according to the IUCN. It is listed globally



Fig. 565: Amur grass lizard, *Takydromus amurensis*.



Fig. 566: Amur grass lizard, *Takydromus amurensis*, eggs and hatchling.

as Least Concern with a stable population trend. Populations in Russia, China, and Korea are also considered stable and abundant. While habitat modification and invasive species are general risks for reptiles, there is no specific evidence that these factors are currently impacting this species on Kami-Tsushima Island.

Conservation status

IUCN Red List: LC (Least Concern).

Environment Ministry Red List: NT (Near Threatened).

Prefectural Red Data Book: VU (Vulnerable) in Nagasaki.



Map 147: Distribution of *Takydromus amurensis*.

Takydromus dorsalis STEJNEGER, 1904

English name: Sakishima grass lizard

Japanese name: サキシマカナヘビ (Sakishima kanahebi)

Introductory information

Restricted to the Yaeyama Islands of Okinawa Prefecture, including Ishigaki, Iriomote, Kohama, and Kuro Islands. Endemic to these southernmost islands of Japan, it is easily recognised by its slender body, bright green dorsum, and exceptionally long tail. Its limited range and habitat specialisation make it a key example of Ryūkyū endemism and an important species for regional conservation.

Description

Size: SVL about 60–72 mm. TL 180–250 mm, 300–350% of SVL. ToL abut 240–322 mm.

Femoral pores: Two or three per side.

Colour and pattern: Dorsum bright green. Venter pale green or pale yellow-green.

Lateral band: A narrow blackish-brown stripe from the preocular region across the eye to the anterior edge of the ear opening.

Recognition

Femoral pores two or three per side. The dorsum is bright green without any pattern; supralabials are black. Distribution does not overlap with other Japanese *Takydromus* species.