

Snake-Lizard *Lialis* sp. in suburban Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

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Observer: Oke Millett.
Photograph by: Oke Millett.
Subject identified by: Nick Baker.

Location: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.
Habitat: Suburban, landed property, close to urban centre.
Date and time: 26 February 2016, 17:30 hrs.

Identity of subjects: Snake-lizard, *Lialis* sp. (Reptilia: Squamata: Pygopodidae).

Description of observations: An elongate reptile, with an estimated total length of 13 cm, was observed late afternoon inside a landed property. It was assumed to be a snake, and was only later identified as a Snake-lizard. It was carefully removed and placed in the garden : whilst being moved it was found to be extremely docile in temperament.



Fig. 1.

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Remarks : There are just two species of Snake-lizard in the genus *Lialis*, one of seven genera in the family Pygopodidae. These are near legless lizards : the forelimbs are completely absent, and the hindlimbs are reduced to small, rudimentary structures either side of the vent.

Both *Lialis* species occur in Papua New Guinea : Burton's Snake-lizard *Lialis burtonis* (which also occurs in Australia) appears to be confined to the south of the country, whilst the endemic Jicari Snake-lizard *Lialis jicari* is more widespread. To distinguish between the two species, which can vary in external appearance, requires a scale count, particularly of the supralabials. Both species may potentially occur in Port Moresby (O'Shea, 1996).

References: O'Shea, M. (1996). *A Guide to the Snakes of Papua New Guinea*. Independent Publishing Group Pty Ltd. 239 pp.