

The Pelagic Gecko

The pelagic gecko is actually a species complex comprised of four karyotypic morphs and both unisexual and bisexual populations.

By Mark O'Shea

Distribution: Queensland (Australia), New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Mariana Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Western Samoa.

Habitat: Coconut plantations, gardens and forest edges.

Diet: Insects.

Max.length: 60mm SVL (120mm TL).

Reproductive strategy: Oviparous with clutches of 2 eggs.

The pelagic gecko is actually a species complex comprised of four karyotypic morphs and both unisexual and bisexual populations. However, pelagic geckos from different populations are morphologically indistinguishable and the splitting of the species has not been widely accepted beyond the recognition of a bisexual species, *N.multicarinatus*, from southern Solomons and Vanuatu.

Pelagic geckos do not possess the dilated digits generally associated with geckos because they are primarily terrestrial and secretive by nature. They are undoubtedly the more commonly encountered lizards in coconut husk piles or under forest-floor debris.

Sources for more information:

Donnellan S.C. & C.Moritz 1995 Genetic diversity of bisexual and parthenogenetic populations of the tropical gecko *Nactus pelagicus* (Lacertilia: Gekkonidae). *Herpetologica* 51(2):140-154

McCoy M. 1980 Reptiles of the Solomon Islands. *Wau Ecology Handbook* No.7. vi+80

Zug G.R. & B.R.Moon 1995 Systematics of the Pacific slender-toed geckos *Nactus pelagicus* complex: Oceania, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands populations. *Herpetologica* 51(1):77-90.