

Project Update: August 2018

Covering period of this report: April 2018 – July 2018 (3 months)

Progress during period:

1. Field survey and sample collection

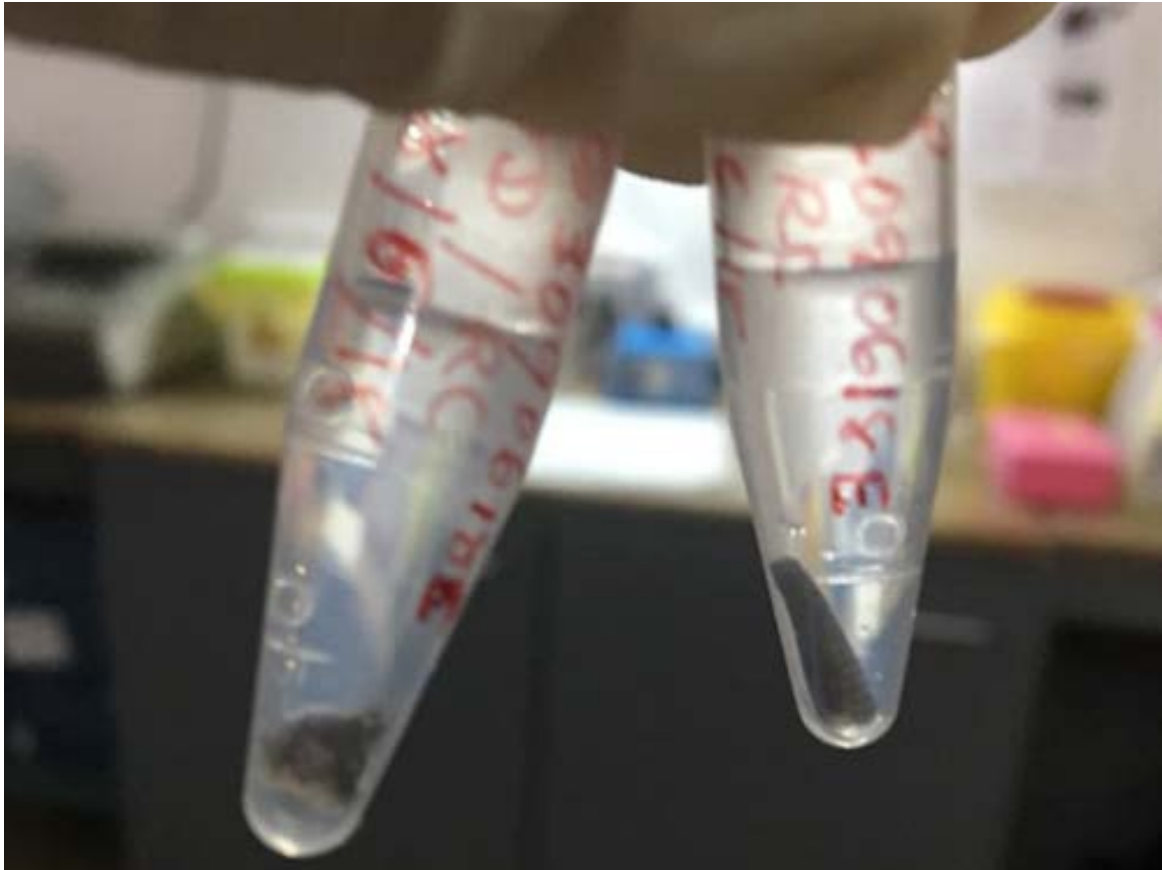
Field surveys to collect the morphometric measurements and tissue samples of *Lankascincus* skink species were carried out in Deniyaya (Southern Province) and Kithulgala (Sabaragamuwa Province) areas. The surveys were carried out within the existing forest trails under the supervision and guidance of the respective forest and wildlife officers. Tail tissue samples from three *L. gansi* specimens and one *L. greeri* specimens were collected during the sampling. Morphometric measurements of four individual species were obtained. The collected samples were preserved in 90% ethanol and transported to the laboratory for genetic analysis. Collection of other required samples and morphometric measurements will be continued during the next phase of the project.



*Obtaining morphometric measurements of a live skink in the field.
Deniyaya field visit. © Dr. Iresha Harischandra*

2. Laboratory analysis

Optimisation of DNA extraction using collected tail tissue samples was carried out using a commercially available DNA extraction kit (Blood & Tissue DNA Extraction Kit, Qiagen). Extraction of genomic DNA from all collected tissue samples is under process. The primers required for the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) have been identified and designed. Optimisation of the PCR reactions and amplification will be carried out in the next phase of the project.



Extraction of genomic DNA from skink tail tissue samples in the laboratory. © Ruwini Cooray

3. Conservation awareness programmes

Preparations for the conservation seminar series has been carried out. The detailed protocols for the conservation seminar are prepared. A leaflet on endemic *Lankascincus* species to disseminate among participants is prepared and currently at the printing stage. The pre- and post- seminar questionnaires have been finalised and printing will be carried out. Conducting seminars will be commenced in the next phase of the project.