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The first record of *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw. ex A.Heller (Dennstaedtiaceae) in Thailand

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ABSTRACT. *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw. ex A.Heller is newly recorded for Thailand.

Pteridium aquilinum (L.) Kuhn is generally recognized, as a single species with two subspecies, namely *aquilinum* and *caudatum* (Fletcher & Kirkwood, 1979). The subspecies *aquilinum* includes eight varieties, *viz. wightianum*, *aquilinum*, *decomposition*, *feei*, *pubescens*, *africanum*, *latiusculum* and *pseudocaudatum*, while the subspecies *caudatum* includes three varieties, namely *arachnoideum*, *esculentum* and *yarrabense* (Tryon, 1941). This species is one of the most widely distributed of the vascular plants, occuring in almost habitats of the world. In many regions it occurs in woodland, in others it invade grassland, becoming a noxious weed difficult to eradicate due to its persistent underground rhizome (Fletcher & Kirkwood, 1979). Two varieties in each subspecies, namely *wightianum* and *yarrabense* are previously known from Thailand (Tagawa and Iwatsuki, 1979).

In addition to the knowledge of Thai pteridophytes, *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw. ex A. Heller has been found on mountain slope in hill evergreen forest or pine forest in northern and north-eastern Thailand. This new record is a dwarf bracken; its precence in Thailand is in agreement with its present geographical distribution. A description below is based on Thai materials.

Pteridium aquilinum (L.) Kuhn var. **latiusculum** (Desv.) Underw. ex A. Heller, Cat. N. Amer. Pl. ed. 3, 17. 1909. Eastern bracken —*Pteridium aquilinum* subsp. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Shieh, Fl. Taiwan 1: 255–258, pl. 91. 1975. —*Pteris latiuscula* Desvaux, Mém. Soc. Linn. Paris 6. 2: 303. 1827. —*Pteridium latiusculum* (Desv.) Fries Wiss. Erg. Schwed. Rhod.-Kongo-Exped.1: 7. 1914. Fig. 1. A-B.

Rhizome long-creeping, covered with fine pale brown hairs. *Stipe* 12–20 cm, lamina broadly triangular to sometimes ovate, 2-pinnate to 3-pinnate-pinnatifid at base, 20–40 × 20–40 cm, pinnae 3–8 pairs; rachises and costae glabrous or sparsely pilose abaxially. Pinnae broadly to narrowly triangular or oblong; terminal segment of each pinna ca. 2–4 times longer than wide. Pinnules at 45°–60° angle to costa; fertile ultimate segments adnate or equally decurrent and surcurrent. Outer indusia entire or somewhat erose, glabrous.

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Thailand.— NORTHERN: Chiang Mai; NORTH-EASTERN: Loei [(Phu Kradueng, *T. Boonkerd* 1099 (BCU)].

Distribution.— Asia: South China, Taiwan, Japan; North America and Europe.

Ecology.— Terrestrial on exposed mountain slopes or plains in hill evergreen forest or pine forest at 1,250–1,350 m altitudes. The three varieties growing side by side in some areas. The disturbed and abundoned mountainous areas are luxuriantly covered with these brackens thus effectively reducing habitat of the other terrestrial species. It is poisonous to livestock, and carcinogenic to humans. (Fletcher & Kirkwood, 1979).

Pteridium aquilinum (L.) Kuhn var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw. ex A. Heller is one of a subgroup of the bracken that can be identified using the following key. This has been extracted from the Flora of Thailand: Dennstaedtiaceae account (Tagawa & Iwatsuki, 1979), and has been amended to include the new variety.

KEY TO THE VARIETIES

1. Pinnules sessile or nearly so
   2. Rachis and costa glabrous or sparsely hairy on under surface **1. var. latiusculum**
   2. Rachis and costa densely hairy in the groove **2. var. wightianum**
1. Pinnules shortly stalked, segments rather widely spaced, terminal lobes more or less distinct, rachis glabrous or nearly so **3. var. yarrabense**

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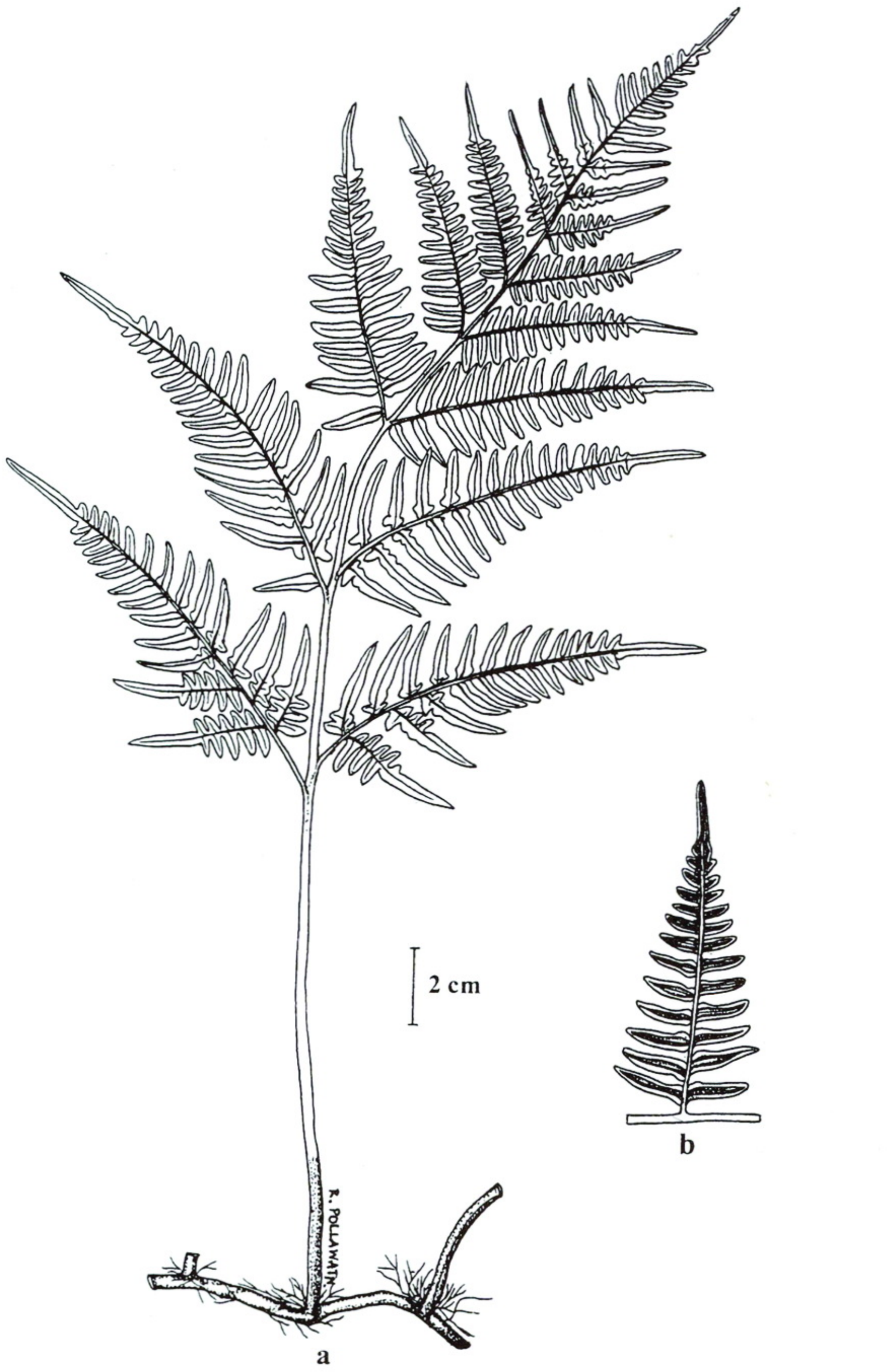


Figure 1. *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw. ex A. Heller: A. Habit; B. a fertile pinnule (A-B *T. Boonkerd* 1099, BCU).