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Phenotypic differentiation of *Podarcis* lizards of western Pontine islands (Italy), inferred by geometric morphometrics

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Islands are fascinating natural laboratory where to study speciation and evolution. Here, we investigated the variation of the head morphology of 374 individuals of *Podarcis siculus* from mainland Italy, Sicily and the Pontine Archipelago, using the geometric morphometric approach. We also included in the analysis samples of an extinct island population. Our results indicated a strong relation between the morphological differences and the phylogeographic structure basing on previously published genetic data, indicating that the western Pontine populations seem to be a case of incipient speciation and that additional information should be addressed to better define their taxonomic status. In addition, the extinct population of Santo Stefano Island clustered in all analyses with the western Pontine populations. This result not only involves the evolutionary history of *P. siculus*, but also entails broader taxonomic considerations and conservation aspects.