

Genus *Australolacerta* Arnold, 1989—Southern rock lizards

Australolacerta contains a single species, *A. australis*, endemic to the Western Cape, South Africa. Salvi *et al.* (2011) found that *A. australis* was part of the southern African branch of the tribe Eremiadini, which includes *Tropidosaura*, *Meroles* and *Pedioplanis*. A recent analysis of mitochondrial and nuclear DNA sequences indicated that *A. rupicola*

is not closely related to *A. australis* (which is more closely related to *Tropidosaura*—see also Salvi *et al.* 2011) and it was placed in a separate genus, *Vhembelacerta* (Edwards *et al.* 2012, 2013a). Female *A. australis* lay clutches of up to seven eggs (Branch 1998). This species occurs in several protected areas and is considered to be of Least Concern.

Australolacerta australis (Hewitt, 1926)

SOUTHERN ROCK LIZARD

Andrew A. Turner

Global: Least Concern

Endemic

Taxonomy: No notable issues.

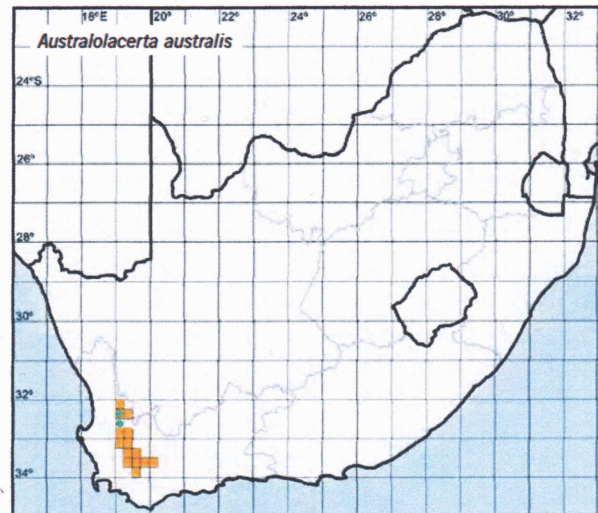
Distribution: This montane species is endemic to the Western Cape, South Africa, occurring from the northern Cederberg in the north to the Hex River Mountains in the south, and eastwards to Kwadousberg (Mouton 1988b; Branch 1998). The eastern limits on the Langeberg have not yet been determined.

Habitat: Found in fynbos on the rocky mountain slopes of the Cape Fold Mountains, often near moisture. Prefers large exposed rock such as cliff faces and rock slabs on sandstone outcrops (Branch 1998).

Bioregion: Northwest Fynbos, Southern Fynbos, Western Fynbos-Renosterveld, Southwest Fynbos.

Assessment rationale: Recent surveys in the Cape Fold Mountains indicate that this species is widespread and reasonably common (M.J. Cunningham pers. comm.). It occupies rugged, rocky areas that provide shelter from fire and minimise direct anthropogenic threats. Much of its range is protected.

Conservation measures: Given the extensive protection already afforded to this species, no conservation actions are recommended.



Australolacerta australis—Heuninglei, Cederberg Wilderness Area, WC
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