

EUROLIZARDS

Podarcis liolepis - Catalanian Wall Lizard



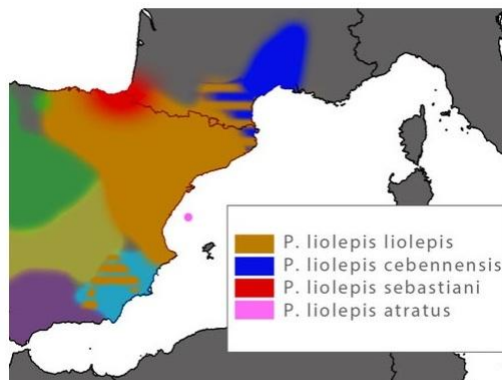
Subsp. liolepis, Male: F / Pyrénées-Orientales, 22.06.2008

The Catalanian Wall Lizard is a quite adaptable, well climbing species which can be found in various habitats and even frequently within human settlements. Although being a (sub-)Mediterranean species, it is able to inhabit mountain habitats with cold winters up to 2000 m altitude (Pyrenees, Sistema Ibérico, Sistema Bético).

Being such a 'generalist', its distribution ranges from the French Rhône-Valley in the north to the Spanish Sierra Nevada in the south. It shows a great variability which has led to the description of several subspecies:

- *Podarcis liolepis cebennensis* has been described for southern France. But geographic delimitation towards the nominate subspecies is doubtful.
- The Spanish Columbrete Archipelago is populated by the dark blotched *subspecies atratus*. However, this might be just an insular morph of the nominate subspecies.
- *Subspecies sebastiani* has been described for the Basque Country area. Presumably, this may be just an ecotype of the nominate subspecies.
- In the south of the range, additional - so far undescribed - colour morphs occur (see below).

With regard to this, some intra-specific taxonomic revision might be required.



Distribution of *Podarcis liolepis* with its currently recognized subspecies. For an overview of all Iberian *Podarcis* species see map at *Podarcis hispanicus*.

In north of the range, *Podarcis liolepis* has contact zones with *Podarcis quadarramae*. This species lacks of blue outer ventral scales which frequently occur in males of *Podarcis liolepis*. *Podarcis liolepis* may also co-occur with *Podarcis muralis* (e.g. Penyalgosa, E / Castellón) but it is smaller, more slender and usually shows a lighter colouration than the latter one.



Nominate subspecies: E / Vinuesa (Soria), 02.09.2019 - This male shows a light dorsolateral line and dark supra-dorsolateral and vertebral line.



Female with distinct 'stripe pattern': E / Cañada del Hoyo (Cuenca), 08.09.2014



Subsp. *cebennensis*, male: F / Alba-la-Romaine, 16.06.2017 - This subspecies occurs in southern France and maybe a small area in north-eastern Spain (Montseny). It is more slender than the nominate subspecies and has no blue outer ventral scales.



Subsp. *sebastiani*, pair: F / Basque Country, 24.08.2016 - This subspecies is more robustly built than the nominate subspecies; males frequently show greenish colouration on the backs. Note the smaller female in front.

Southern colour morphs

In the southern part of the range, two morphs can be found:

- In the coastal limestone mountains of the northern Alicante Province a „green morph“ occurs with males frequently showing bright green colours.
- In the Baetic Mountain Range (provinces of Albacete, Murcia, Jaén and Granada), *Podarcis liolepis* is restricted to mountain habitats above 1000 m.

In its southern range, *Podarcis liolepis* has contact zones with the following species:

- *Podarcis hispanicus* is smaller and shows no bluish outer ventral scales. Whereas *Podarcis hispanicus* lives in warm and dry habitats, it gets replaced by *Podarcis liolepis* in higher altitudes with cooler, more humid climate.
- *Podarcis virescens* can be identified by frequently showing a yellow underside of the tail.
- In the northern slopes of Sierra Nevada, distinguishing between *Podarcis liolepis* and *Podarcis vaucheri* by external characters may be challenging or rather impossible. These southernmost populations are hardly explored, so far.



'Green morph', male with prey: E / Alicante, 01.03.2019



'Green morph', female: E / Alicante, 01.03.2019 - Females may show a strong lateral stripe pattern.



'Green morph', male: E / Alicante, 23.12.2015 - the 'green morph' occurs in coastal limestone mountains.



Male: E / Sierra Espuña (Murcia), 18.09.2018 - Note the bluish outer ventral scales.



Male: E / Sierra de Cazorla (Jaén), 30.10.2017 - A specimen with rather dark pattern.




EUROLIZARDS

Male: E / Sierra de Segura, 20.09.2018 - Note the orange underside of this climbing specimen.




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The area of the Guadalquivir river source (E / Jaén) on 1400 m altitude: Habitat of *Podarcis liolepis*, *Atgyroides marchi* and *Timon lepidus*.


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