

EUROLIZARDS

Podarcis ionicus - Ionian Wall Lizard



Female: GR / Zakynthos, 29.05.2017 - An extensively green specimen.

The Ionian Wall Lizard is a good example for alternating taxonomic systematics: Initially, this species had been described by LEHRS in 1903. However, BOULENGER (1907) recognized it as a subspecies of *Podarcis tauricus*. Recent genetic analysis revealed that it actually should be regarded as a separate species'.

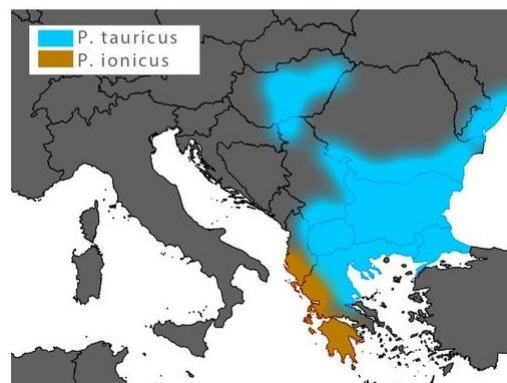
In fact, the two species show morphological differences: *Podarcis tauricus* has broad dark supra-dorsolateral streaks, which are reduced to single blotches in *Podarcis ionicus*. Therefore, the back of *Podarcis ionicus* appears widely green whereas *Podarcis tauricus* only shows a green vertebral streak. Furthermore, *Podarcis ionicus* tends to have more green colouration on the flanks than *Podarcis tauricus*. The undersides may be white, yellow or even orange.

Podarcis ionicus inhabits a wide range of well-vegetated habitats. It seems to climb more than *Podarcis tauricus*. Geographically, the Pindos Mountain Range acts as an efficient barrier between the two species.

The distribution range of *Podarcis ionicus* covers southern Albania, western Greece, the Ionian Islands (Corfu, Kefalonia, Ithaka, Zakynthos) and the Peloponnese.

It may co-occur with the following species:

- In Western Greece and on Peloponnese, *Podarcis ionicus* could be confused with *Podarcis erhardii* or *Podarcis muralis*. Both species have no green colouration and frequently show dark blotches on the labials which lack in *Podarcis ionicus*.
- On Peloponnese, *Podarcis ionicus* also co-occurs with *Podarcis peloponnesiacus*. Males of the latter one often show bright orange but no bright green colours. Females of *Podarcis peloponnesiacus* have dark vertebral stripes, which usually lack in *Podarcis ionicus*. However, in some cases the two species may look quite similar - hence, a closer look may be required: *Podarcis ionicus* frequently shows a distinct brown streak between eyes and ears, which lacks in male *Podarcis peloponnesiacus*. Additionally, the latter one tends to have more prominent blue blotches on shoulders.



The distribution areas of *Podarcis ionicus* and *Podarcis tauricus* are separated by the Pindos mountain range.



Male: GR / Ithaka, 31.05.2017 - This species frequently climbs on trees.



Male: GR / Kefalonia, 29.05.2014 - Note the orange throat.



Male: GR / Feneos, 26.10.2012 - Podarcis ionicus frequently shows a brownish streak between eyes and ear opening.



Female: GR / Ithaca, 30.05.2017 - Note the wide green area on the back.



The shores of Lake Stymphalia (Peloponnese) - Habitat of *Podarcis ionicus* and *Lacerta trilineata*.

* PSONIS, N. & ANTONIU, A. & KUKUSHKIN, O. & JABLONSKI, D. & PETROV, B. & CRNOBRNJA-ISAILOVIC, J. & SOTIROPOULOS, K. & GHERGHEL, I. & LYMBERAKIS, P. & POULAKAKIS, N. (2017) - Hidden diversity in the *Podarcis tauricus* (Sauria, Lacertidae) species subgroup in the light of multilocus phylogeny and species delimitation. - *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, 106: 6-17.



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