

EUROLIZARDS

Lacerta viridis - Eastern Green Lizard



Subsp. viridis, male: RO / Nera Gorge, 31.05.2013 - An extraordinary beautiful male.

Eastern Green Lizards are impressive encounters with males frequently showing deep blue heads in spring.

Their distribution area ranges over the Balkan Peninsula (south to Central Greece) and the Danube river system to the Black Sea Coast. Some isolated populations exist in Central Europe. This species lives in areas with sufficient vegetation and sometimes is also abundant inside of forests (e.g. in Romania).

Lacerta viridis may be confused with the following species:

- *Lacerta trilineata* looks similar but males show no bright blue heads. Juveniles (and sometimes females) of *Lacerta trilineata* have a light vertebral line which lacks in *Lacerta viridis*. *Lacerta viridis* has shorter heads with rather blunt snouts.
- *Lacerta viridis* may also co-occur with *Lacerta agilis* (e.g. in Romania) which is smaller with a compact body.
- Distinguishing between *Lacerta bilineata* and *Lacerta viridis* in their contact zone may turn out to be impossible (see discussion at *Lacerta bilineata*).

Besides of the *nominate subspecies*, the following subspecies occur in our area:

- *Subspecies guentherpetersi* lives in mountains in Central Greece (Ossa) and on Evia. It's a big morph with males having greenish instead of blue throats.
- *Subspecies meridionalis* is actually a Turkish subspecies which shows a characteristic colouration with brownish tails and hind limbs. In Europe, it seems to be restricted to a few areas in Eastern Greece and European Turkey. Specimens from the Bulgarian and Romanian Black Sea Coast may look similar but maybe, these are just an ecotype (an adaption to sparse and dry habitats) of the nominate subspecies.
- The populations along the Adriatic coast from Pindos in the south to Friaul / Italy in the north are referred to the "*Adria Clade*" which in genetic respect differs substantially from the nominate subspecies. However, they cannot be distinguished by external characters.



The distribution ranges of *Lacerta bilineata* and *Lacerta viridis* (for contact zones, see discussion at *Lacerta bilineata*).



Subsp. viridis, female: RO / Orsova, 29.05.2013 - Note the whitish throat.



Subsp. viridis, juvenile: RO / Orsova, 30.05.2013 - Juveniles of Lacerta viridis usually have whitish throats.



"Adria Clade", male: GR / Corfu, 03.06.2017 - This clade cannot be distinguished from the nominate subspecies by external characters.



Subsp. guentherpetersi, male: GR / Evia, 02.06.2012 - Males of this subspecies have yellow instead of blue throats. The subspecies has been discovered after biologists caught some specimen as they erroneously thought it was Lacerta trilineata.



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Subsp. meridionalis, male: GR / Chalkidiki, 16.06.2009 - Note the green back and the brownish tail and hind limbs.



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The Nera Valley in Western Romania - an excellent habitat for *Lacerta viridis*.

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