

EUROLIZARDS

Darevskia praticola - Meadow Lizard



Male: RO / Eşelnița (Orsova), 01.06.2013 - These lizards often hide in litter.

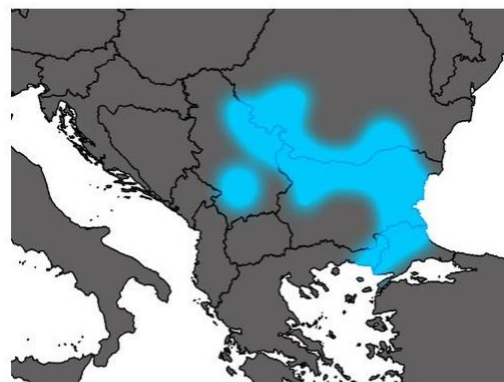
Imagine a lizard so small that it can use a dry beech leaf as a deck chair - There you have *Darevskia praticola*! Basically, the genus *Darevskia* comprises over 30 species, mainly in the Caucasus area, with *Darevskia praticola* subsp. *pontica* being its only representative in our area.

In our area, it occurs in southern Romania, parts of Serbia, eastern Bulgaria, the extreme northeast of Greece and the European part of Turkey.

The Meadow Lizard is an inconspicuous, ground-dwelling species which prefers habitats with dense vegetation: We found it in meadows but also in forests, where it often hides in leaf litter.

Within its distribution area, it may be confused with the following species:

- [Zootoca vivipara](#) looks similar. But it has - if at all - a narrow dark vertebral line, whereas *Darevskia praticola* shows a broad vertebral streak with dark edges - sometimes this looks like a double line on the back. The latter one has a whitish, yellow or greenish underside which is frequently orange at *Zootoca vivipara*. In Eastern Europe, *Zootoca vivipara* seems to be limited to mountain habitats whereas *Darevskia praticola* lives in lower altitudes. So, cases of syntopy should be rare.
- [Podarcis muralis](#) usually has a narrow vertebral line, which is frequently interrupted into single spots. It has a white or orange throat with dark spots whereas *Darevskia praticola* has a whitish unspotted throat. *Podarcis muralis* is significantly bigger than *Darevskia praticola*, which becomes obvious where both species live in syntopy.
- confusion with [Podarcis tauricus](#) and [Podarcis erhardii](#) cannot be excluded. However, both species can be distinguished from *Darevskia praticola* by not showing a dark vertebral line.



The range of *Darevskia praticola* on the Northern Balkans.



Male: RO / Eșelnița (Orșova), 01.06.2013 - Note the broad vertebral streak.



Male: RO / Mănăstirea Vodita (Orșova), 01.06.2013 - *Darevskia praticola* has whitish, unspotted throats.



The forests along the Danube valley upstream of Dobreta Turnu Severin (Romania) are habitat for *Darevskia praticola* and *Lacerta viridis*.

