

*Timon tangitanus* (BOULENGER, 1887)

LC

**Common names:** Moroccan Ocellated Lizard (E), Lézard ocellé du Maroc (F), Lagarto ocelado del Atlas (S).

**Range:** Morocco, northwestern Algeria. An isolated population may occur in northern Atlantic Sahara.

**Distribution in Morocco:** Found mainly at medium to high elevations in most Mediterranean climatic regions of Morocco including the Anti-Atlas (where it seems to be restricted to the surroundings of Igherm, Michel GENIEZ pers. comm.) and Atlas Mountains range, pre-Saharan humid valleys (Draa, Todra, Dadès and Ziz), the Atlantic coast in the region of Rabat, the Tingitan Peninsula, Rif Mountains, Debdou and extreme northeastern Morocco, east of the Moulouya River. Reaches 2,700 m a.s.l. in Oukaimeden (High Atlas). In Atlantic Sahara, a single specimen has been found and photographed in March 2004 at 3 km past Lemseyed towards Dchira (Laayoune region) (MATEO *et al.* 2004) after it was first reported half a century ago by VALVERDE (1957) from five localities in the same area along the lower Sekhlat Al Hamra.

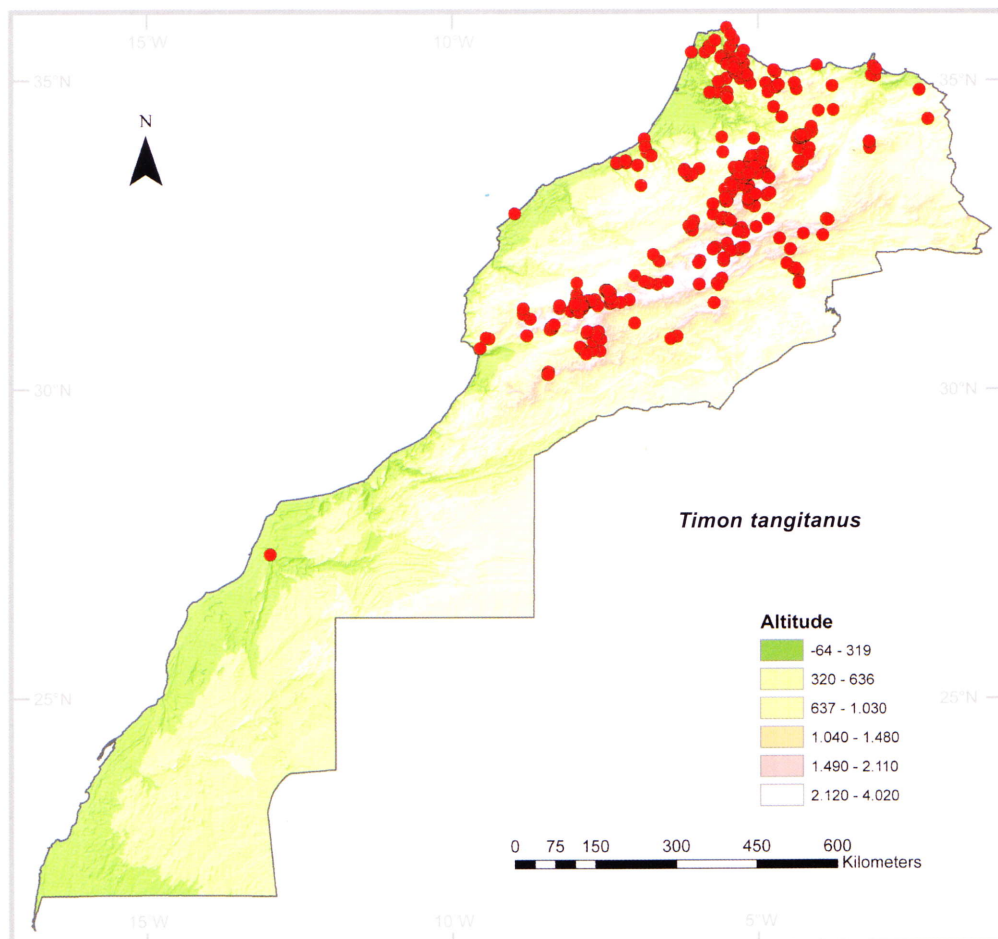
**Altitude:** 90–2,700 m.



Fig. 554: *Timon tangitanus*, detail of an adult male in spring. Oukaimeden.

M. SCHWEIGER

**Identification:** Large green lizard attaining a length of up to 50 cm including the tail and a SVL of 18 cm. Robust head with well-developed masseterics. Dorsal colour green (in spring) or brownish (in summer and autumn), often with a reticulated pattern of black scales and blue ocelli on the flanks. Usually a blue throat, including in females and juveniles. Juveniles have a distinct pattern with blue ocelli circled in black on each side and white-yellow ocelli on the dorsum.













◁ Fig. 555: Adult male *Timon tangitanus* in defensive posture. Azrou.

D. SALVI



Fig. 556: *Timon tangitanus*, juvenile with normal colouration (Mídel; A) and rare uniform pattern (Ifrane; B). G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL

**Habitat:** Occurs in Mediterranean habitats, with rocky outcrops and boulders, bushes and middle-elevation mountain forests, especially Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) forests. In rural areas and high plains (e.g., in the High Atlas) also occupies stone walls. Near



Fig. 558: *Timon tangitanus*, subadult with grey autumn colouration. Aguelmam Sidi Ali. G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL



Fig. 557: A very colourful subadult *Timon tangitanus* from Jebel Tazzeke. G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL

Saharan rivers, it can be found in palmeries with dense vegetation.

**Biology:** Hibernates at middle and high elevations. Some populations show a sex ratio strongly biased towards males (e.g., in Oukaimeden). Copulation occurs during April–May. Females deposit 1–3 clutches of 2–20 eggs, hatching in autumn. Diet includes mainly worms, insects, and snails.

**Remarks:** In the earliest times included in the genus *Lacerta* as *Lacerta lepida* DAUDIN, 1802, but is now assigned to the genus *Timon* (MAYER & BISCHOFF 1996, ARNOLD *et al.* 2007) and considered a distinct species relative to *T. lepidus* from western Europe, and *T. pater* from Tunisia and Algeria (MATEO *et al.* 1996). *Timon tangitanus* shows three genetic lineages: one in the north (Rif and Tingitana Peninsula), another widespread across central Morocco and one in the High Atlas and further south (PERERA & HARRIS 2010b). Recently a new lineage was found nearby Agoual in the northeastern Middle Atlas (J. ABREU *et al.* unpubl.).



Fig. 559: *Timon tangitanus*, competition for refuge with *Agama impalearis* in eastern Morocco. S. FRAHM





Fig. 560: *Timon tangitanus*, adult male in spring colouration demonstrating arboreal behaviour. Ain Leuh.

J. M. PLEGUEZUELOS



Fig. 561: *Timon tangitanus*, adult male in spring colouration. Jebel Tazzeke.

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