

## *Podarcis pityusensis* (Boscá, 1883)

### Main synonyms

*Lacerta muralis* var. *pityusensis* Boscá, 1883 ; *Lacerta pityusensis* : Boulenger, 1921.

### Common names

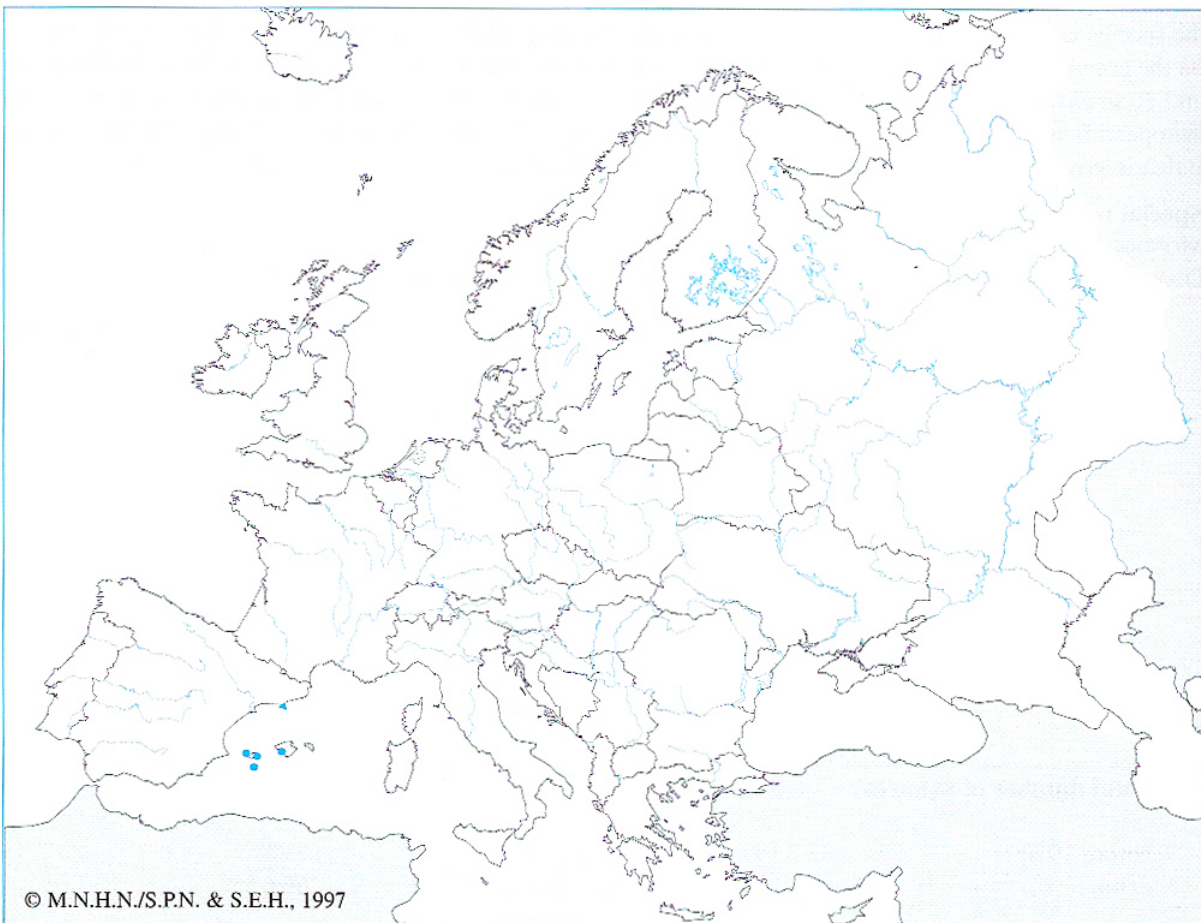
GB : Ibiza wall lizard ; F : Lézard des Pityuses ; D : Pityusen-Eidechse ; CAT : Sargantana d'Eivissa ; E : Lagartija de las Pitiusas.

### Terra typica

Ibiza, Balearic Islands.

### European subspecies

42 subspecies have been described but only six are now considered valid : *Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis* (Boscá, 1883) ; *Podarcis pityusensis affinis* (Müller, 1927) ; *Podarcis pityusensis formenterae* (Eisentraut, 1928) ; *Podarcis pityusensis kameriana* (Mertens, 1927) ; *Podarcis pityusensis maluquerorum* Mertens, 1921 ; *Podarcis pityusensis vedrae* (Müller, 1927).



**Distribution**

The species is found on the islands of Ibiza and Formentera as well as on the small islets surrounding these, even tiny rocks have their own population but it is absent from some islets. Martínez Rica & Cirer (1982) give 44 localities where the species lives, but in 1985 its presence was confirmed for only 40 islands or islets, the most important being Ibiza, Formentera, Espalmador, Penjats, Espardell, Rates, Malvins, Grossa de Sta. Eulalia, Tagomago, Bledes, Conillera, and Vedra. Moreover, the species has been introduced many years ago in some places on Mallorca, and recently a flourishing population, also introduced, has been found in Barcelona.

The most important feature of this species is the high colour, morphological, and genetic variability, a consequence of a microevolutionary radiation which has allowed an adaptation to the harsh island conditions and to predation pressure by non raptor birds (mainly gulls). Formerly, it was accepted that every islet had its own subspecies, but it is now clear that within island variation is greater than between island variation. Discussion of taxonomic issues and of the adaptive value of colour variation are found in Cirer & Martínez Rica (1990).

The species evolved from nearby continental species, probably before the first glacial periods, in late Pliocene. Ancestors were small common lizards close to *Podarcis muralis* which became isolated when the Ibiza group was separated from the larger islands (Mallorca and Menorca). The glacial-interglacial cycles, with the subsequent fall and rise of sea level, repeatedly changed the structure of the archipelago, joining and separating several times the main Ibiza island to and from the surrounding islets. That gave the lizard populations many opportunities to evolve rapidly, and to adapt themselves to the island conditions.

**Altitudinal distribution**

The range of altitudes is narrow because of the coastal location of most populations and because the highest point in Ibiza is only 475 m anyway.

**Populations status and conservation problems**

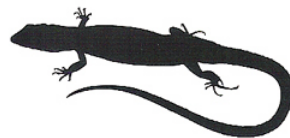
The majority of the populations seem to be in good condition, having a high density and using the scarce resources of the small islets with great efficiency. Some populations however live in so small places that they can easily have wide fluctuations and these are always in danger. The populations most at risk are those of 16 islets, among them Gastabi, Alga, Torretes, Caragoler, Sal Rosa, Hort, Sa Mesquida, and Margalida. The main threat is the use of the lizards as pets : most illegal captures are done by collectors who sell the animals to pet shops in Europe. The beautiful colours of some varieties make them prize animals to keep in terraria. Because it is an endemic and has such a small range, the species is protected in several ways. Of course, national and regional laws forbid the capture and keeping of Ibiza wall lizards. Illegal collectors have often been fined and their catch returned to the capture place.

**Special references**

MONOGRAPHS : Salvador (1986 c).

DISTRIBUTION, SYSTEMATICS and BIOLOGY : Martínez Rica & Cirer (1982), Cirer (1987), Cirer & Martínez Rica (1990).

A. M. CIRER & J. P. MARTÍNEZ RICA



<b>Total number of squares :</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0,11 %</b>		
◦ before 1970 :	0		• after 1970 :	4      80,00 %
× extinct :	0		▲ introduced :	1      20,00 %