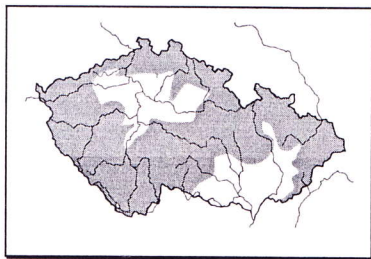




a) The head of a male *Zootoca vivipara* from Tři Studně. (P. NEČAS); **b)** A female of *Z.v.* from Tři Studně. (P. NEČAS); **c)** A male of *Z.v.* from Tři Studně - ventral view. (P. NEČAS); **d)** A melanistic *Z.v.* from Raduň. (L. GVOŽDÍK).

Zootoca vivipara (JACQUIN, 1787)



COMMON NAMES: ještěrka živorodá (c), Common Lizard, Viviparous Lizard (e), Waldeidechse (g), lézard vivipare (f), живородящая ящерица (r)

SYSTEMATICS: Monotypic species recently assigned to the genus *Zootoca* Wagler, 1830.

Z.v. pannonica is ignored by the majority of authors, by some, however, considered as a distinct species.

DESCRIPTION: A small lizard with max. L of 17 cm. Head small, flat, rounded, usually 1 PN, 2 LO, 4 (3–5) SL between rostral and subocular. Supraciliary granules mostly absent (rarely 1–4), 5–6 chin shields. Pileus variable, collar serrated. Body relatively slender, body scales mostly smooth, oval, weakly keeled medially. Back medially with 0–2 rows of scales, smaller than those on flanks, 30–39 MSR, 61–80 BSR, ventrals in 6–8 rows. Legs short, thin. Tail relatively short (TL 53–71% of the L), fragile; autotomy developed. Tail scales keeled. Femoral pores 8–12. Coloration and pattern variable. Back brown, grey to olive. FF usually with a dark vertebral stripe, 2 light dorsolateral stripes and little dark spots on flanks. MM often without stripes, but with small ocelli. Belly in MM yellow, orange to red, often with dark spots; in FF cream, yellow to orange, usually without spots. Throat whitish grey, spotted. JUVs blackish with bronze tails. Sexes differ in colour and pattern, MM have a thickened tail base, larger head and more prominent femoral pores.

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION: *Z. vivipara* has the largest range of any lizard: N-Eurasia from IRL to Sakhalin Island and from N-E, N-BG beyond the polar circle in N (70°N).

Europe: A, B, BE, BG, CH, CZ, D, DK, E, EST, F, FIN, GB, H, HR, IRL, LA, LI, LU, MG, N, NL, PL, RO, RUS, S, SK, SLO, U, YU.

HABITAT: Confined to moist habitats with dense vegetation from lowlands (200 m a.s.l.) up to high elevations (1,600 m), mostly above 400 m a.s.l.: e.g. forest edges, clearings, moist and alpine meadows, marshes, peat bogs; banks of streams, rivers and ponds.

NOTES ON BIOLOGY: A diurnal lizard. Though mostly ground dwelling, it climbs well, especially to higher basking places. A species with a small home range (diameter 20–35 m). Hibernation in burrows under stones, tree roots etc. Beginning of seasonal activity: e.II–IV, MM earlier than FF. Mating season: V–VI, MM grasp the FF with jaws in the sacral region. Being viviparous (except oviparous populations from Pyrenees), FF give birth to 3–10 JUVs surrounded by a fine membrane and measuring 45–50 mm in e.VII–VIII. End of annual activity: IX–X. Maturity reached in the 2nd–3rd year. Water not avoided during escape, swimming and diving are not uncommon behaviours. Food consists mainly of spiders and soft-bodied insects and their larvae. Often infested by the thick *Ixodes ricinus*.

CONSERVATION STATUS: Common at higher altitudes, lowland populations considerably smaller and endangered by habitat destruction. Protected by law and classified as a markedly endangered species. In the RDB, it is listed as vulnerable.