

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A new record of *Eremias montanus* Rastegar-Pouyani & Rastegar-Pouyani, 2001 (Sauria: Lacertidae) from Kurdistan Province, Western Iran

ZAHED BAHMANI¹, NASRULLAH RASTEGAR-POUYANI² AND AHMAD GHARZI¹

¹Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Lorestan University, Khoramabad, IRAN

²Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Razi University, Kermanshah, IRAN

Abstract.—During field work in western regions of the Iranian Plateau in the Zagros Mountains, a single specimen belonging to the genus and subgenus *Eremias* Fitzinger, 1834 was collected from the highlands of Badr and Parishan (at about 2466 m elevation) in south of the city of Qorveh, Kurdistan Province, western Iran (47°, 47' E; 35°, 04' N) in July 2010. This is the first record of occurrence of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* from Kurdistan Province.

Key words. Lacertidae, *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus*, new record, Qorveh, Kurdistan Province, Iranian plateau, Zagros Mountains

Citation: Bahmani, Z., Rastegar-Pouyani, N., and Gharzi, A. 2011. A new record of *Eremias montanus* Rastegar-Pouyani & Rastegar-Pouyani, 2001 (Sauria: Lacertidae) from Kurdistan Province, Western Iran. *Amphib. Reptile Conserv.* 5(1):11-14(e21).

The lacertid lizards of the genus *Eremias* Fitzinger, 1834, encompass about 37 species of mostly sand, steppe, and desert-dwelling lizards which are distributed from northern China, Mongolia, Korea, Central and southwest Asia to southeastern Europe (Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson 1997; Anderson 1999). This genus is Central Asian in its relationships and affinities (Szczerbak 1974). About 16 species from this genus occur on the Iranian Plateau, mostly in northern, central, and eastern regions (Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson 1997; Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001; Anderson 1999).

As a member of this genus, *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* is distributed in western Iran, in Kermanshah and Hamadan Provinces (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001, 2005; Rastegar-Pouyani, N. et al. 2006, 2007; Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al. 2009).

So far, there are no further records of occurrence of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* in other regions of the Zagros Mountains, including Kurdistan Province, which is located on the western periphery of the Iranian Plateau, bordered by Iraq on the west (Fig. 1). In July 2010, we collected a single specimen of this taxon from the highlands of southern Kurdistan Province from the Badr and Parishan region, about 20 km south of Qorveh city near the Aminabad village (47°, 47' E; 35°, 04' N; 2466 m).

The collected specimen was active during the daytime, foraging on rocks and in rock crevices as well as

under bushes. The habitat is an upland area, characterized by steppe vegetation, being covered with snow from late November until late March (in the snow covered years) (Fig. 2).

Measurements in millimeters (mm) and pholidotic characters, as well as color pattern of the collected specimen, are as follows:

Snout-vent length (SVL) 59.5; tail length 95.5; axilla-groin distance 26; foreleg length 22.8; hind leg length 37.4; head length 20; head width 11; head height 5.27; dorsal scales slightly converging posteriorly with 65 small granular scales across middle of dorsum; venter with 13-14 longitudinal and 27-28 transverse rows of plates; subocular reaches mouth edge; one frontonasal; two supraoculars which are not completely separated from frontal and frontoparietals; 14 scales across widest part of venter; lower surface of the fourth finger containing two rows of subdigital scales; the lateral scales of the fourth finger without carinate lamellae; 25-26 scales on the 11th annulus of the tail; 8-9 upperlabials, 4-5 of which anterior to subocular; 7-8 lower labials; two supraoculars; 6-7 supraciliaries; 20-20 femoral pores, separated by three scales; 11-12 collars; five pairs of submaxillary shields.

Coloration: the collected specimen is an adult male, dorsum dark-brown almost without spots and ocelli, interrupted by five light longitudinal stripes, the vertebral

Correspondence. ²Email: nasrullah.r@gmail.com

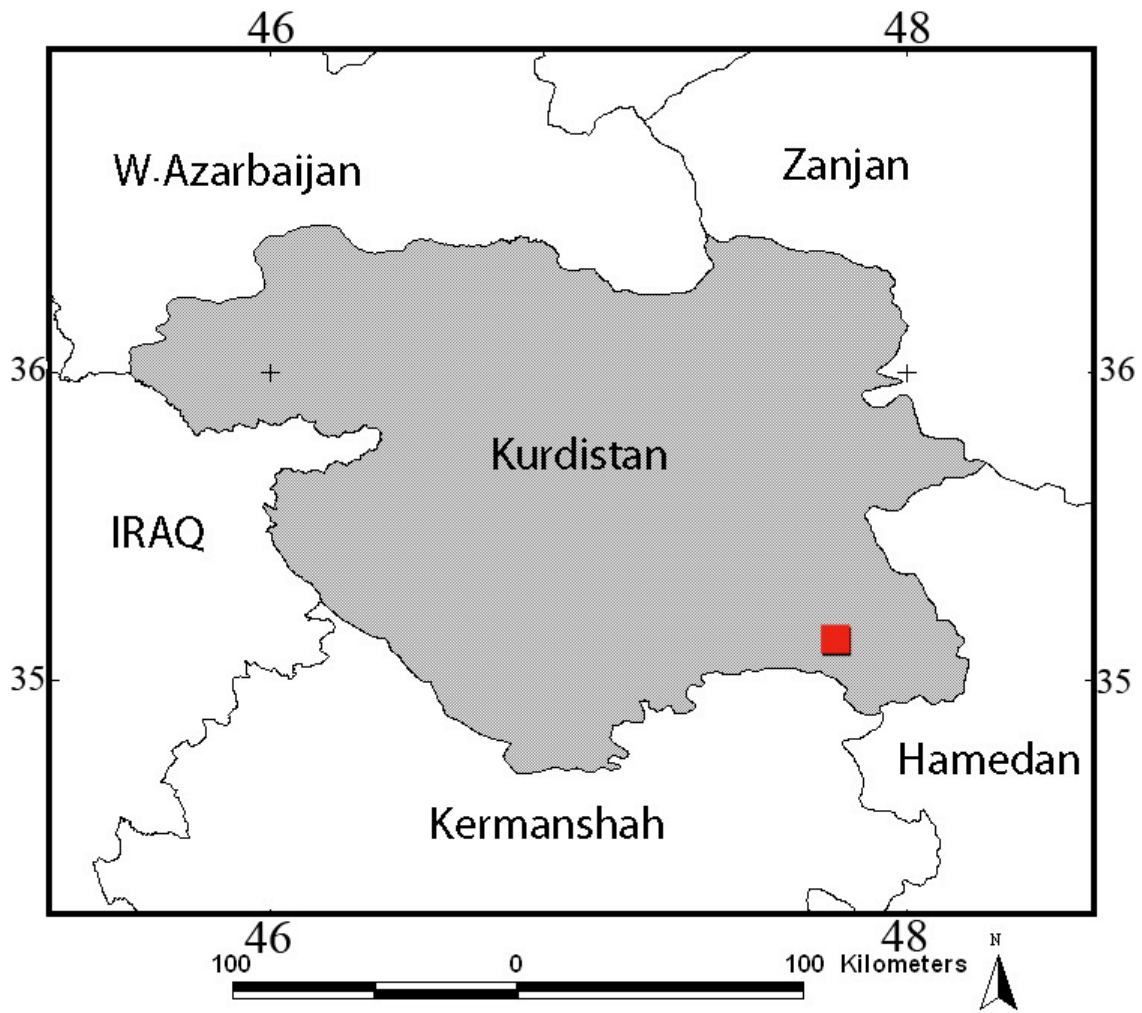


Figure 1. The red square is the location of the newly-collected specimen of *E. (Eremias) montanus* in Kurdistan province.



Figure 2. The natural habitat of *Eremias (Eremias) montanus* (new record) in Badr and Parishan highlands, at about 2466 m elevation.



Figure 3. Dorsal view of the collected specimen of *Eremias (Eremias) montanus*.

stripe bifurcating on the nape, a single paravertebral stripe on each side and two dorsolateral stripes containing light spots; venter dirty-white; the proximal lower caudal region being whitish-gray, becoming lighter distally. The collected specimen is preserved in 75% alcohol and is deposited at the collection of the Razi University Zoological Museum (RUZM-LE30.7) (Fig. 3).

Remarks: *Eremias (Eremias) montanus* was first described in 2001 from the highlands of Kermanshah Province, western Iran at an elevation of more than 2000 m (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001). This lizard belongs to the mountainous radiation of the *Eremias persica* species complex inhabiting high elevations of the Zagros Mountains (Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al 2009). In 2005, Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani reported a new and unknown population of *Eremias* from the high elevations (about 2800 m above sea level) of the Alvand Mountains in Hamedan Province. These authors tentatively named the new population as *Eremias novo* (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2005). With further morphological and molecular studies it was shown that this new population is conspecific with *Eremias (Eremias) montanus* (Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al. 2009). Thus, the original range of the species extended into highlands of Hamedan Province, some 175 km toward the south.

Acknowledgments.—We thank Hiwa Faizi, Dr. Ahmadi, and Taher Soltani for their kind cooperation during field work in western Iran.

References

- Anderson, S. C. 1999. *The Lizards of Iran*. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles Contributions to Herpetology **15**:1-442.
- Rastegar-Pouyani, N., Johari, M., and Parsa, H. 2006. *Field Guide to the Reptiles of Iran. Volume 1: Lizards*. First edition. Iran, Razi University Publishing. 286 p. (In Farsi).
- Rastegar-Pouyani, N., Johari, M., and Rastegar-Pouyani, E. 2007. *Field Guide to the Reptiles of Iran. Volume 1: Lizards*. Second edition. Iran, Razi University Publishing. 296 p. (In Farsi).
- Rastegar-Pouyani, N. and Nilson, N. 1997. A new species of *Eremias* (Sauria: Lacertidae) from Fars Province, South-Central Iran. *Russian Journal of Herpetology* **4**(2):94-101.
- Rastegar-Pouyani, N. and Rastegar-Pouyani, E. 2001. A new species of *Eremias* (Sauria: Lacertidae) from highlands of Kermanshah Province, western Iran. *Asiatic Herpetological Research* **9**:107-112.
- Rastegar-Pouyani, N. and Rastegar-Pouyani, E. 2005. A new form of *Eremias* from Alvand Mountains, Hamedan Province, Western Iran. *Iranian Journal of Animal Biosystematics* **1**(1):14-20.
- Rastegar-Pouyani, E., Rastegar-Pouyani, N., Kazemi Nouredini, S., Joger, U., and Wink, M. 2010. Molecular phylogeny of the *Eremias persica* complex of the Iranian plateau (Reptilia: Lacertidae), based on mtDNA sequences. *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* **158**(3):641-660.
- Szczerbak, N. N. 1974. *Yaschurki Palearktiki [The Palearctic Desert Lizards]*. Akadeimya Nauk Ukrainskoi SSR Institut Zoologii. Naukova Dumka, Kiev, Ukraine. 92 photos, 296 p. (In Russian).

Manuscript received: 02 February 2011

Accepted: 19 February 2011

Revised: 23 March 2011

Published: 30 August 2011

Final version: 05 September 2011



Zahed Bahmani earned his B.Sc. in General Biology from Tabriz University of Eastern Azarbaijan Province, Iran, in 1996. Zahed is presently progressing toward an M.Sc. degree in Animal Biosystematics at Lorestan University, Khoramabad, Iran. His research thesis investigates the lizard fauna of Kurdistan Province, Iran under the advisement of Dr. Ahamd Gharezi and Professor Nasrullah Rastegar-Pouyani. Zahed's research interests include taxonomy, ecology, conservation, and phylogeography.



Ahmad Gharzi graduated with an M.Sc. degree in Animal Biology from Tehran University, where he worked on lizard faunas of eastern Iran. Ahmad later received a Ph.D. from Durham University, UK, in Developmental Biology and is now an academic staff at Lorestan University, Iran. His interests involve different aspects of biology including histology, developmental biology, and taxonomy.



Nasrullah Rastegar-Pouyani earned his B.S. in Zoology from Razi University Kermanshah, Iran in 1986 and his M.S. in Zoology from Tehran University, Tehran, Iran in 1991, where he studied herpetology with the agamids as the central object. He started his Ph.D. in Gothenburg University, Sweden in 1994 under the advisement of Professor Göran Nilson and graduated in 1999, working on taxonomy and biogeography of Iranian Plateau agamids with *Trapelus* as the main object. His research interests include taxonomy and biogeography of the Iranian Plateau, the Middle East and Central Asian herpetofauna.