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A new lizard from Iran, *Eremias (Eremias) lalezharica* sp. n. (Reptilia: Lacertilia: Lacertidae)

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Abstract. A new lacertid species, *Eremias (Eremias) lalezharica* sp. n., is described from the area of Mount Lalezhar, SE Iran. It differs from all other species of the typical subgenus (*E. afghanistanica*, *nikolskii*, *persica*, *regeli*, *strauchi*, *suphani* and *velox*) in that a group of 3–5 (8) smaller shields is to be found laterally and posterior to each 4th (exceptionally 5th or 3rd) submaxillary shield. A higher rate of separation of 4th (41.7 %) and 3rd (16.7 %) submaxillary shields from lower labials is another characteristic feature of the described species. In addition, the combination of other pholidotic characters and the colour pattern distinguish the new species from any of the species mentioned above.

Key words. Reptilia, Lacertidae, *Eremias*, new species, Iran.

Six specimens of a new lizard referable to the genus and the typical subgenus *Eremias* were found among herpetological materials collected by Ing. B. Pražan during the Third Czechoslovak-Iranian Entomological Expedition to Iran of the National Museum, Prague in 1977. These specimens are referred to *Eremias lalezharica* sp. n. The name is derived from a term “Kuh-e Lalezhar” the Iranian name of the mountain at the foot of which the type locality is situated.

Eremias lalezharica sp. n.

Holotype: National Museum (Nat. Hist.), Prague, NMP6V 34555/3, adult female, Iran, ostan Kerman, Lalezhar (29° 31' N, 56° 51' E), N foot of Mount Lalezhar (elevation 2800–3100 m), leg. B. Pražan, 24–30 May 1977.

Paratypes: NMP6V 34555/1–2, adult males; NMP6V 34555/4–5, adult females; same data as holotype. Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut und Museum Koenig, ZFMK 54840, adult female, same data as holotype.

Diagnosis and description: A species of subgenus *Eremias* (subocular bordering mouth, only one frontonasal, two supraoculars, femoral pores series separated by a very short space and reach the knee; see Ščerbak 1974). It differs from all other known species by several [3–5 (8)] smaller shields situated laterally and posterior to each 4th submaxillary shield, instead of a distinct individual 5th submaxillary. The 5th submaxillary is exceptionally well developed and the smaller shields are located laterally and posterior to it. The smaller shields can also surround the 4th submaxillary and together with it border the 3rd submaxillary. Higher rate of separation of 4th (41.7 %) and 3rd (16.7 %) submaxillary shields from lower labials, as consequence of above described arrangement of the chin shields, is another characteristic feature of the new species. In addition, it differs from each species of the typical subgenus in the following character combinations (see published data in Ščerbak 1974, Bischoff & Böhme 1980, Böhme & Ščerbak 1991; the material used for a first-hand comparison is listed in parentheses at each species):

From *E. afghanistanica* Böhme & Ščerbak, 1991 in a higher count of dorsals (54–59 versus 44–46), higher number of upper labials anterior to subocular (6–7 versus 5–6), higher count of gulars (33–40 versus 25–28), having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields, frequent occurrence of a small scale between prefrontals (66.7 % versus 0.0 %), smaller L/Lcd ratio (0.59–0.69 versus 0.73–0.79), and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 8584, 13320 (holotype and paratype)].

From *E. nikolskii* Bedriaga, 1905 in a higher number of upper labials anterior to subocular (6–7 versus 5–6, N = 5), higher count of gulars (33–40 versus 20–28), having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields, and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 30393–395; NMP6V: 34675/1–2].

From *E. persica* Blanford, 1874 in having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields, having frontonasal broader than long (100 % versus 1.75 %), more frequent occurrence of a small scale between prefrontals (66.7 % versus 1.75 %), higher L/Lcd ratio (0.59–0.69 versus 0.47–0.62), smaller body size, and in colour pattern [ZFMK 7117, 8655, 14469, 20986; NMP6V: 34674].

From *E. regeli* Bedriaga, 1905 in a higher count of gulars (33–40 versus 14–24), having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields, more frequent occurrence of a small scale between prefrontals (66.7 % versus 1.0 %), higher number of scales in 9th–10th caudal annulus (25–32 versus 17–25), in that fewer specimens possess keeled upper caudal scales (16.7 % versus 100 %), higher L/Lcd ratio (0.59–0.69 versus 0.45–0.60), and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 7114, 13322, 16370–373; MNP6V: 34676/1–2].

From *E. strauchi* Kessler, 1878 in a higher count of gulars (33–40 versus 19–33), having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields, in that fewer specimens possess keeled upper caudal scales (16.7 % versus 95.2 %), and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 8777–780, 14393, 16407–408, 18731–733, 24741–744, 29278–279, 38102–112, 40444; NMP6V: 5555].

From *E. suphani* Basoglu & Hellmich, 1968 in a higher number of upper labials anterior to subocular (6–7 versus 5–6), frequent occurrence of a small scale between prefrontals (66.7 % versus 0.0 %), in that fewer specimens possess keeled upper caudal scales (16.7 % versus 64.3 %) and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 26249–251 (paratypes), 16319, 49901–902, 51914; NMP6V: 34668/1–2, 34669].

From *E. velox* (Pallas, 1771) in a higher number of upper labials anterior to subocular (6–7 versus 5–6), higher count of gulars (33–40 versus 19–33), having 1–2 rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields (0–1 in *velox*), more frequent occurrence of small scales between prefrontals (66.7 % versus 3.5 %), higher number of rows of preanal scales (5–6 versus 3–4), in that fewer specimens possess keeled upper caudal scales (16.7 % versus 99.6 %), and in colour pattern. [ZFMK: 8781–783, 16409, 24745–747, 30396–402, 30487–488, 39099; NMP6V: 5556, 34670–672, 34673/1–6].

Description of holotype: Snout-vent length (L): 70 mm. Tail length (Lcd): 101 mm. Dorsal scales across midbody: 54. Transverse series of ventral scales: 33. Ventral scales in longest row across belly: 16. Preanal scales in 6 transverse rows. Upper labials anterior to subocular (left/right): 6/6. Gular scales in straight median series:

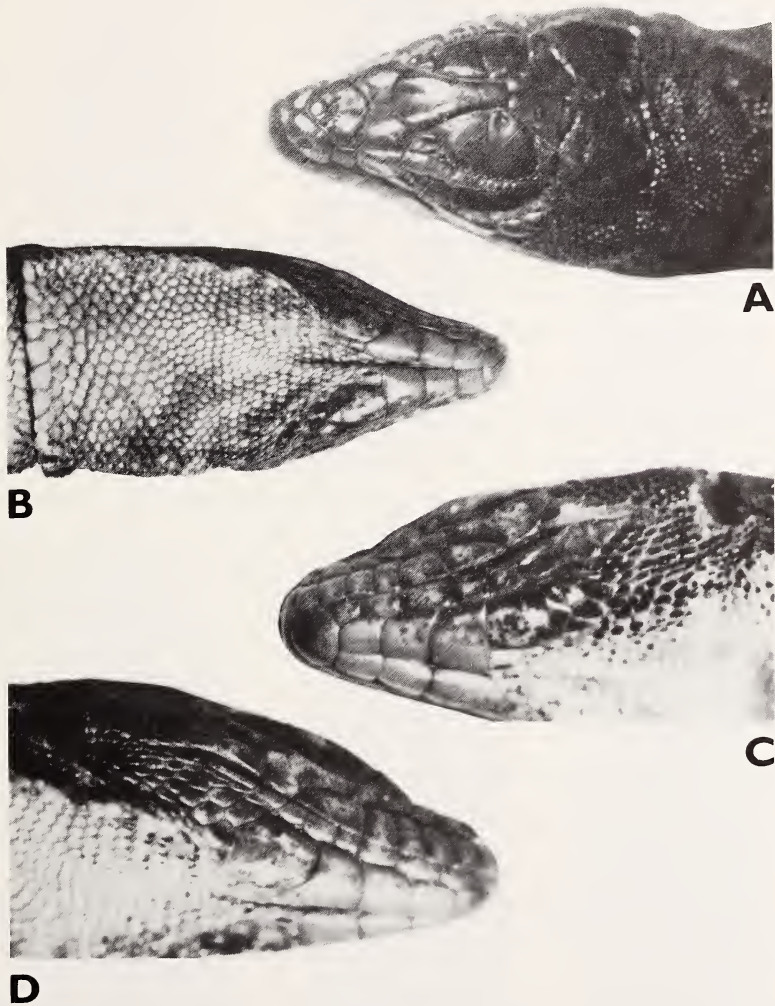


Fig. 1: Holotype of *Eremias lalezharica* sp. n., NMP6V 34555/3. A: Dorsal view of head. B: Ventral view of head. C: Side view of head (left side). D: Side view of head (right side).

35. Two rows of gulars in contact with second pair of submaxillary shields. Several smaller shields on each side behind 4th submaxillary shields (3+1 / 2+2) (Fig. 1). Fourth submaxillary shields in contact with lower labials. Enlarged scales in collar: 14. Frontonasal broader than long. Prefrontals not separated by a small scale. Frontal not separated from supraoculars by granules. Scales in 9th–10th caudal annulus: 25. Femoral pores: 17/15, the series separated by 4 scales and on each side barely reaching inner surface of knee. Upper caudal scales smooth.

Colour rather dark owing to initial preservation in formalin. The dorsal pattern consists of two dorsal and two dorsolateral light longitudinal stripes more or less interrupted into small whitish spots. The lateral and median edges of these spots are bordered with black. On each flank is a light lateral stripe beginning at posterior edge of ear opening and reaching the groin. Between the dorsolateral and lateral stripes is a row of formerly blue ocelli-like spots extending forwards before the forelimbs and backwards above the insertion of hindlimbs. The ocelli are sporadically complemented, from above or below, with other smaller spots (Fig. 2). Upper labials dark with white markings. Dorsal surface of limbs dark with lighter spots. Venter white, the lateral ventrals marked with black.

Description of paratypes: Measurements and counts for five paratypes are given as follows: NMP6V 34555/1, 34555/2, 34555/4, 34555/5, ZFMK 54840.

Snout-vent length (mm): 67, 68, 71, 68, 61. Tail length (mm): ?, 116, 104, ?, 93. Dorsal scales across midbody: 59, 55, 59, 56, 55. Transverse series of ventral scales: 32, 31, 30, 30, 31. Ventral scales in longest row across belly: 14, 15, 15, 14, 15. Rows of preanal scales: 6, 5, 6, 6, 6. Upper labials anterior to subocular: 6/6, 6/7, 7/6, 6/6. Gular scales in straight median series: 33, 35, 40, 35, 34. Rows of gulars contacting second pair of submaxillary shields: 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. Smaller shields on each side behind 3rd–5th submaxillary: 3+2+2+1/3+2+1 (3rd/3rd), 2+2+1/2+2+1 (5th/5th), 2+1/2+2 (4th/5th), 2+2+1/3+2 (4th/4th) 2+1/2+1 (4th/4th). Fourth submaxillary in contact with lower labials (+): —/—, —/—, +/+, +/—, +/+. Third submaxillary in contact with lower labials: —/—, +/+, +/+, +/+, +/+. Enlarged scales in collar: 15, 14, 14, 15, 13. A small scale between prefrontals (+): —, +, +, +, +. Scales in 9th–10th caudal annulus: 32, 29, 27, 29, 25. Femoral pores: 18/18, 17/18, 18/16, 17/19, 17/19; the series separated by 3, 3, 4, 5 and 5 scales. Upper caudal scales weakly keeled (+): —, +, —, —, —. All specimens have frontonasal broader than long. The colour pattern is shown in fig. 2.

Sexual dimorphism: Males have more conspicuous ocelli with better developed black margins. Females have less interrupted dorsolateral and dorsal light stripes and a higher L/Lcd ratio.

Habitat: Hoberlandt (1983) characterized the type locality as: “Mountain plateau in the vicinity of Lalezhar village — degraded steppe with *Artemisia herba-alba*, *Astragalus* sp., *Zygophyllum* sp., *Salvia* sp., *Ferula* sp. Gardens and fields with *Ligurus sativus* and poplar, wet meadows with *Orchis* sp., *Pedicularis* sp., *Carex* sp., *Juncus* sp., *Mentha* sp., *Eleocharis pauciflora*”.

According to B. Pražan (collector) all specimens of *Eremias lalezharica* were collected in open fields of soil and stones washed down from the slopes of Mount Lalezhar. Large solitary stones and only scanty vegetation were a characteristic

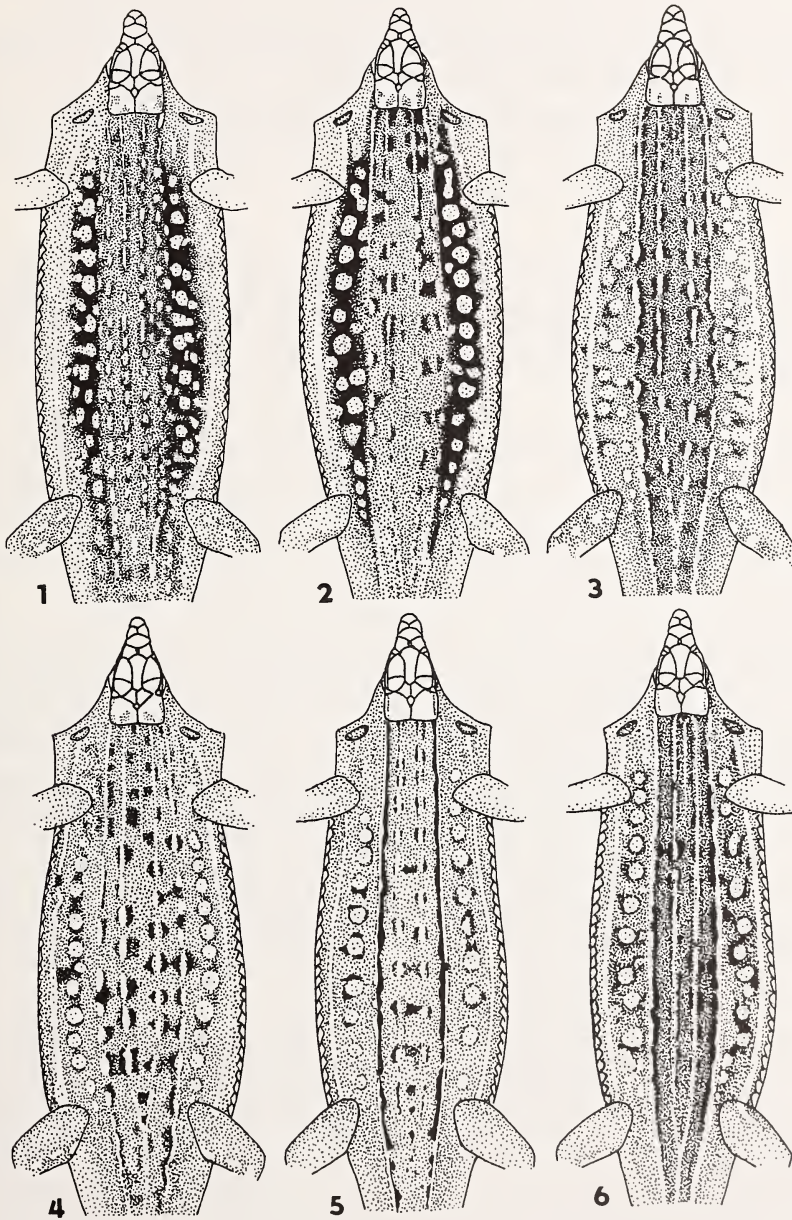


Fig. 2: Colour pattern of *Eremias lalezharica* sp. n. (scheme). 1–2: Paratypes (males), NMP6V 34555/1–2. 3: Holotype, NMP6V 34555/3. 4–6: Paratypes (females), NMP6V 34555/4–5, ZFMK 54840.

feature of these areas. The lizards were not rare in this locality and were frequently observed also on the banks of some near "wadi" (perhaps Lalezhar river) and in the vicinity of irrigated gardens at the southern part of the Lalezhar village.

At the same locality *Eremias fasciata*, *E. grammica*, *Laudakia caucasia*, *L. microlepis* and *Trapelus agilis* ssp. were collected.

Remarks: At least two females were gravid. The holotype contains three well developed eggs, about 9 mm long and 7 mm wide. Female 34555/5 has one big palpable egg, about 14 mm long.

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Zusammenfassung

Aus der Umgebung des Mt Lalezhar in Südost-Iran wird ein neuer Wüstenrenner als *Eremias (Eremias) lalezharica* sp. n. beschrieben. Die Art unterscheidet sich von allen anderen der Untergattung durch den Besitz von Ansammlungen von 3–5 (8) kleinen Schildern, die lateral und posterior jedem 4. Submaxillarschild (gelegentlich dem 3. oder 5.) angelagert sind. Weitere Unterschiede in der Anordnung und Anzahl von Körperschuppen und das Farbmuster charakterisieren die Art deutlich.

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