

were collected on Nias, in times when the human population of this island was rather isolated, as indicative of natural dispersal across the Mentawai Strait from Sumatra during times of Pleistocene low sea levels, and not as the result of human activity.

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**KEY WORDS:** Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Elapidae: *Bungarus candidus*; Malayan Krait; venomous snakes; new island record; Mentawai Strait, Nias, Sumatera Utara, Sumatra, Indonesia

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### *Elaphe dione* (PALLAS, 1773), a snake taxon new to the Turkish herpetofauna

The Dione Ratsnake *Elaphe dione* (PALLAS, 1773) is a widespread colubrid which occurs from Korea and south-eastern Russia to extreme south-eastern Europe (SCHULZ 1996; DAREVSKY 1997). In the Western Palearctic region, it is known from European Russia and Kazakhstan (south-eastern part, along the lower Ural and Volga valleys), Caucasian isthmus), Azerbaijan, eastern Georgia, Armenia (near Yerevan) and Ukraine.

Two of us (JG and FN) found three specimens of *E. dione* (fig. 1) on April 28, 1988 in north-eastern Turkey, 2 - 3 km south-west of the village of Yacı (= Yaycı) [39,930° N / 43,957° E] (province of Iğdır, on the north-north-eastern base of the Zor Dağı Mountains). The snakes were found sun basking in the morning, on walls of irrigation canals. The habitat was a sandy steppe with riparian forests of *Salix* and *Populus*.

The closest known record of *E. dione* stems from south of Yerevan, Armenia (SCHULZ 1996; DAREVSKY 1997), about 60 km ESE of our Turkish locality. Our finding adds a taxon to the Turkish herpetofaunal inventory and extends the western distributional limits of the known territory of *E. dione* (asterisk in fig. 2) which is coarsely described by a curved line connecting the following record localities: south of Kuybyshev (lower Volga River, Russia), near Melitopol (Ukraine), 2-3 km south-west of Yacı (Turkey), and the Shahrood area (Iran). This distribution corresponds roughly to the vegetal zone of the "Arabo Caspian steppic formations" as shown in in MARTÍNEZ RICA (1997). It is likely that the Turkish range of *E. dione* includes the whole Arax (=Aras) river valley east of Tuzluca. Further field work will be necessary to verify this hypothesis.



Fig. 1: Adult Dione Ratsnake *Elaphe dione* (PALLAS, 1773) from 2-3 km south-west of Yacı (=Yaycı) [39,930° N / 43,957° E, province of Iğdır, east Anatolia, Turkey]. Photograph by J. GARZONI.



Fig. 2: Western distribution of *Elaphe dione* (PALLAS, 1773), according to SCHULZ (1996), DAREVSKY (1997), pers. obs. The asterisk indicates the new Turkish record locality.

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### *Lacerta horvathi* (MÉHELY, 1904) in the Tyrol south of the Central Alps

In August 5, 2003 *Lacerta (Iberolacerta) horvathi* (MÉHELY, 1904) was observed by one of the authors (F.T.) in a small tributary valley (Frauenbachtal, 900 m a.s.l.) of the Drau river between Lienz and Oberdrauburg in the Tyrolian portion of the Lienzer Dolomiten massif. This is the first record of *L. horvathi* in the Tyrol apart from one out of a handful of repeatedly discussed findings from north of the Central Alps in the borderland area of Germany and Austria (CAPULA & LUISELLI 1990; FRANZEN et al. 1993; SCHMIDTLER & SCHMIDTLER 1996). During an excursion by FRANZEN, GRUBER, HECKES and LUISELLI, some Bavarian record localities of *L. horvathi* incorrectly allocated by CAPULA & LUISELLI (1990) were rectified. The subsequent German study reported five locations in the vicinity of the Achenpaß region where *L. horvathi* was observed (one turned out to be within the territory of Austria, some 20 m from the borderline; four were clearly located in Germany) (FRANZEN et al. 1993). However, doubts have been uttered concerning

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