

Telescopus fallax (FLEISCHMANN,
1831) found in the
Aegean Island of Chios, Greece

During a trip to the Greek Island of Chios two road-killed specimens of the Cat Snake *Telescopus fallax* (FLEISCHMANN, 1831) were found. The two vouchers, now deposited at the Natural History Museum in Vienna (NHMW), represent the first records of this snake species from the island.

Materials: NHMW 38556: 2 (parts of the body destroyed by ants) next to Beach Mersinidi (Street from Vrontados to Sykadia); leg. KIRCHNER, VII. 2007. Snout-vent length: 420 mm, tail length: 77 mm. Pholidosis: 17 longitudinal rows of dorsalia at midbody, ten sublabials, eight supralabials, one loreal, one preocular, one supraocular and two postoculars; three supralabials (3, 4, 5) bordering the eye. Color-pattern: There are 42 rhomboid, dark brown dorsal markings alternating with a series of narrow grey-brown lateral stripes, reaching the ventral scales. The light-colored scales are covered by fine brown to greyish dots and shine like nacre. Apical pits are present, the anal plate is destroyed. The habitat included stony hills, as well as screes with small bushes or without vegetation.

NHMW 38556: 1 (without head), road from the beach to the village Horit near Volissos; leg. KIRCHNER, VII. 2007. Length of the rest of the body: 150 mm, length of tail: 59 mm. Pholidosis: 19 longitudinal rows of dorsals at midbody, 73 subcaudals, anal plate divided, hemipenis protruding, no apical pits. Color-pattern: There are 33 rhomboid, dark brown dorsal markings present on the torso but must have been a few more in the complete snake. The habitat included stony hills with small bushes, as well as fresh watered gardens with olive and lemon tree plantations.

CHONDROPOULOS (1989) and GRILLITSCH & GRILLITSCH (1999) summarized the records of *T. fallax* from the east Aegean islands of Samos, Lipsos, Kalymnos, Kos and Rhodes. Later, herpetological excursions to the Islands of Ikaria (BROGGI 2001), Gökçeada (BROGGI 1999), the Fourni Archipelago (DIMAKI & LEGAKIS 1999) and Lesbos (EDELMAN & FRANK 2007) did not de-

tect the snake. IOANNIDES et al. (1994) found two specimens on Samos, but did not detail their pholidosis. TSUNIS & DIMITROPOULOS (1994) and KASAPIDIS et al. (1996) did not include the European Cat Snake in their papers about Chios and Lesbos, while CATTANEO (2003) reported the snake from Lesbos (SVL 740 mm, 19 Dorsals, 214 Ventrals and 66 Subcaudals).

Telescopus fallax is well known from the coastal areas of western Asia Minor (BARAN 1995). The great faunal similarity between the east Aegean islands off the west coast of Asia Minor as expressed by Jacard's index of similarity of e.g. 0,733 for Chios and the mainland (KASAPIDIS et al. 1996) suggests that the Cat Snake must be expected to occur on most of them i.e. also on Lesbos and Chios.

There is not much doubt concerning the subspecific assignment of the Cat Snake in the east Aegean islands and adjacent areas of Asia Minor (e. g., environs of İzmir, Efes, Bornova and Milet, in BAŞOĞLU & BARAN 1980) to the nominate race *T. fallax fallax* (compare subspecific diagnoses in GRILLITSCH & GRILLITSCH 1999). However, the validity of the south Aegean island forms remains disputable, they await thorough revision.

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KEY WORDS: Reptilia, Squamata, Serpentes, Colubridae, *Telescopus fallax fallax*, new island record, distribution, Chios, Greece

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