

First record of the erythronotus
color morph in *Lacerta agilis*
bosnica SCHREIBER, 1912,
from Croatia

The Sand Lizard, *Lacerta agilis* LINNAEUS, 1768, is widely distributed in the Palearctic. Its range extends from the British Isles and France in the West, to Lake Baikal and China in the East (BISCHOFF 1984; KALYABINA et al. 2001; SPEYBROECK et al. 2016). From about ten subspecies recognized earlier (BISCHOFF 1984; but see UETZ & HALLERMANN 2018), recent research supported the subspecific status of only three, and the elevation of one (*boemica* SUCHOV, 1929) to full species status (KALYABINA et al. 2001; ANDRES et al. 2014; SPEYBROECK et al. 2016). Two subspecies, *L. a. argus* (LAURENTI, 1768), and *L. a. bosnica* SCHREIBER 1912, are present in Croatia (KALYABINA et al. 2001; ANDRES et al. 2014; SPEYBROECK et al. 2016). The former inhabits lowlands, especially moist meadows in northwestern and eastern Croatia, the latter meadows on high mountains in Lika and Dalmatia, e.g., the Velebit and Dinara Mountains (KARAMAN 1921; PAVLETIĆ 1964; KALYABINA et al. 2001; ANDRES et al. 2014).

Several color morphs of this lizard species are known (SCHREIBER 1912; BISCHOFF 1984; EDGAR & BIRD 2006). Among them, the so-called erythronotus form is characterized by the reddish dorsum, as opposed to the typical brown or green ground color with dark brown dorsal markings (BISCHOFF 1988). Erythronotus forms are known from several subspecies and countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (BISCHOFF 1984, 1988; VEITH 1991; VOGRIN 1999; SCHWEIGER 2008; JELIĆ 2010; BURIC & JELIĆ 2011). For Croatia, two erythronotus records exist for *L. a. argus* from the continental inland biogeographic region (JELIĆ 2010; VILAJ & DVORSKI 2014).

On May 18-19, 2017, the authors visited the meadows of Malo Kamensko (44.644839° N, 15.891625° E, 931 m a.s.l.; NW of Donji Lapac, Lika, Croatia), where an adult female *L. a. bosnica* of the erythronotus form was encountered and caught (Fig. 1). The subspecific status was deter-

mined based both on geography, and by the number of postnasal and loreal scales congruent with what is specified for the subspecies in the literature (BISCHOFF 1984, 1988). The lizard was found on a meadow sparsely scattered with stones and bushes. This is the first Croatian record of this color variation of *L. a. bosnica*.

About 20 more individuals of *L. agilis* were observed in this place, however, of the normal coloration. The erythronotus form appears to be rare in the Balkans when compared to Central European populations.

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Fig. 1 (above and below): Female *Lacerta agilis bosnica* SCHREIBER, 1912, exhibiting the erythronotus color variation, observed near Donji Lapac, Croatia.
(Photos: Roman Cesarec)

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