

Morphological variation of 6 populations of *Podarcis cretensis* in western Crete

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Podarcis cretensis is a recently redescribed species of the genus, endemic to the island of Crete and satellite islands. Its distribution on the island is very particular: On Crete it is found only on the ¼ western part of the island and not on the major satellite islands whereas in eastern Crete it is present only on satellite islands.

As in other *Podarcis* species, it exhibits high diversity and great morphological plasticity, which have led to the description of 7 subspecies of the taxon (formerly *P. erhardii*) in Crete.

Here we study the morphological relationships of 6 populations from western Crete under the light of the new phylogenetic relationships. The 6 populations belong to 3 of the formerly described subspecies. They are distributed in various biotopes: from sandy to rocky, from the north and south part of the island and from sea level to 1000m a.s.l.

We compared 18 morphological characters (11 metric and 7 pholidotic) of these populations in accordance with indications from the relevant literature.

Multivariate analyses techniques were conducted to detect the characters that most differentiate sexes and populations. We compare the results to the formerly recognized subspecies. Moreover we compare the results with the current phylogenetic data as to see if the groupings of populations according to molecular analyses are corroborated by morphological data.

