

## *Timon lepidus* (DAUDIN, 1802)

Eyed lizard

Sardão

*Timon lepidus* is native to the Iberian Peninsula, southern France, and northwest Italy (Ligurian coast). As far as the Iberian Peninsula is concerned it is present throughout the country except for a narrow band along the north coast. In the southeast it is represented by the subspecies *Timon lepidus nevadensis* BUCHHOLZ, 1963. The subspecific status of the small-sized west Galician populations as *Timon lepidus ibericus* (SEOANE, 1884) is controversial (see GALÁN & FERNÁNDEZ 1993, MALKMUS 1995a).

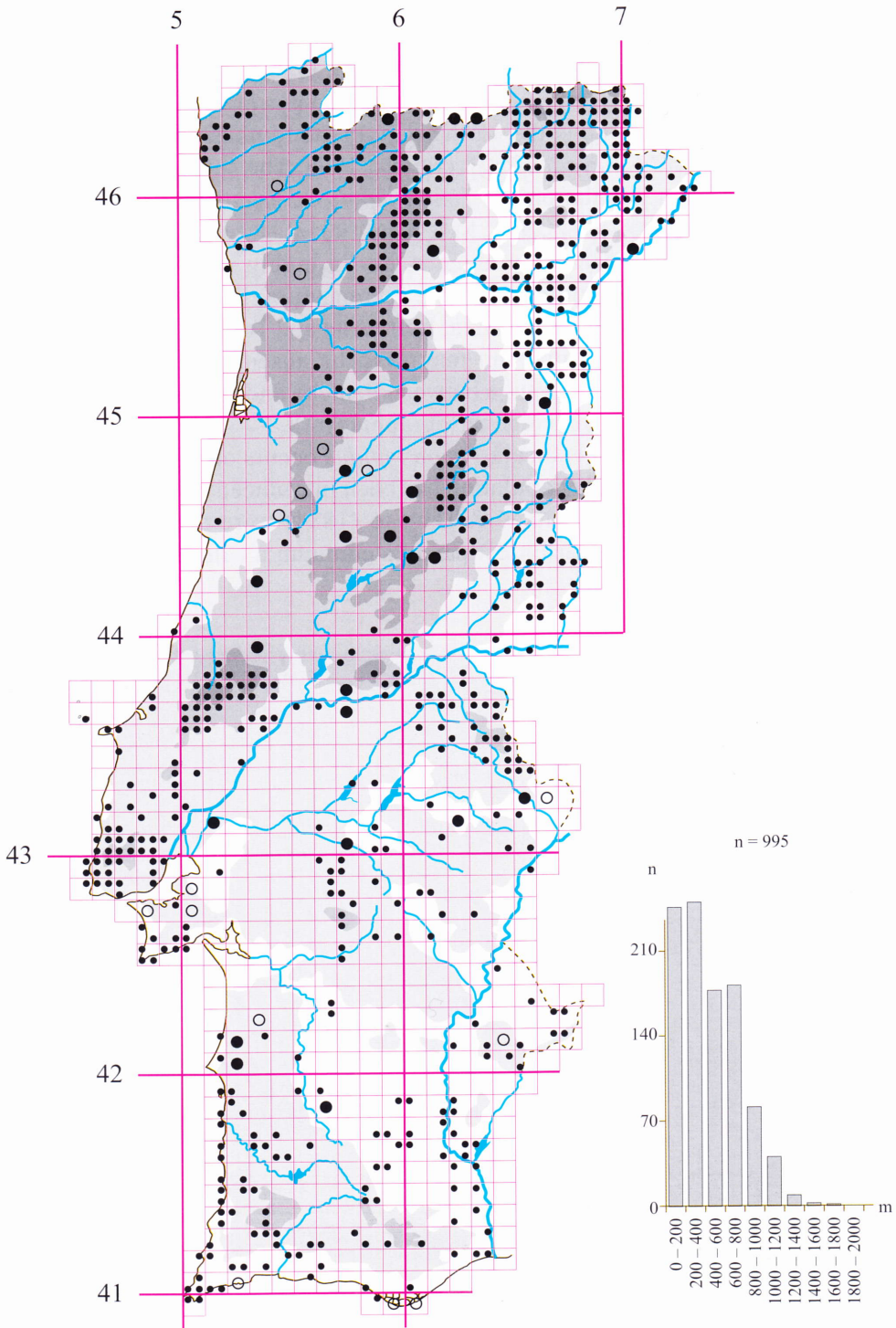
*Timon lepidus* inhabits Portugal nearly throughout, but in highly variable distribution densities. While it is very common in the southern Estremadura, in the environs of the Serra de São Mamede, in the eastern Beira Baixa, Beira Alta and Trás-os-Montes, it is by far more rare in the rest of the country and may even be absent from some regions (Alentejo). The gaps in the distribution range between Peniche and the mouth of the Rio Douro are presumably based on insufficient cartographic work.

On the rocky islets off the Peniche Peninsula *Timon lepidus* occurs on the Ilha Berlenga Grande. It is still unclear whether this population has been introduced or whether it must be regarded as a Pleistocene relict. GIRARD & DAVEAU (1884) were the first to report about this locality and noted, “ce lézard n’est pas très commun à l’île Berlenga” [“this



Fig. 169: Male; Penha García. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.

*Timon lepidus*





lizard is not very common on the isle Berlenga”]. Today the continuously shrinking population consists of less than 500 specimens with a distribution nucleus in a north-facing depression of the island.

The eyed lizard inhabits the entirety of the bioclimatic regions present in the country, and occurs in the semi-arid areas of the southeast as well as in the mountain regions of the northwest with more than 3000 mm of annual precipitation. Its vertical distribution extends from sea level to 1800 m altitude (Serra da Estrela). It does not display any significant preference for a certain altitudinal range below 800 m, but becomes very rare above 1100-1300 m (usually in rock castle landscapes within the Halimio-Ericetum and Genisto-Ericetum: Serra de Castro Laboreiro, Serra do Gerês, Serra do Alvão, Serra de Montemuro, Serra do Barroso). In Spain it ascends up 2320 m in the Sierra Nevada (BENAVIDES et al. 2001).

*Timon lepidus* inhabits a wide variety of habitats within sun-exposed areas of the open and semi-open landscape: garrigues and mountain heaths, rock castle landscapes, loose cork and holm oak stands, fruit tree groves, gravel banks on rivers, and often also rocky structures (such as ruins, castles, walls, stone bolts, scree fields, scarps of roads and railway tracks with scree, etc.), but also the very poorly structured pseudo-steppes and fallow pastures of the southern Alentejo where it finds shelters in holes in the ground, heaps of rocks, and in abandoned farm houses. In the coastal zone it occupies cliffs (in particular the zone of the upper ledge) and partly very loosely vegetated firm sand dunes (vegetation cover < 30 %). From along treeless scarps of roads it may also enter closed *Pinus* and *Eucalyptus* woods. In cultivated lands it may often be found common in abandoned quarries and on walls and stone bolts flanked by hedges, as well as in the immedi-



**Fig. 170:** Juvenile; Algosó (Distr. Bragança). Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



ate vicinity of human settlements. In the valleys of the northern Portuguese mountains contact zones with *Lacerta schreiberi* may occasionally be found. With the latter's preference for principally different habitats, these cases exhibit nice examples of niche vicariance on a small scale.

In general *Timon lepidus* is a ground dweller, but it presents itself also as a skilled, mainly petricolous climber that can scale even the vertical structures of buildings with ease. Rarely is this skill used for thermoregulating by perching on trees or bushes.

The commonly frequented spots in the home range of the eyed lizard unfortunately includes (particularly during morning hours) also the rapidly heated tarmac of roads, rendering this lizard among those reptiles most often killed by traffic. Caused by the rapid increase in both road and traffic densities for the past two decades, a distinct reduction in the number of individuals has become apparent in some regions. Further threats arise from urbanization (see ALLEN 1977), large-scale reforestation, and industrialized agriculture (destructuring of the areas utilized, application of pesticides).

**References:** ALLEN (1977), ALMAÇA (1972), ALMAÇA et al. (1976), BARBADILLO et al. (1999), BISCHOFF et al. (1984), CRESPO (1972, 1974a), CRESPO & OLIVEIRA (1989), DIAS et al. (1983), FARIA (1991), FERRAND DE ALMEIDA & FERRAND DE ALMEIDA (1986), FERRAND DE ALMEIDA et al. (2001), GLANDT et al. (1998), GODINHO et al. (1999), MALKMUS (1979a, b, c, 1981b, 1982a, 1984b, c, 1985a, b, c, 1986, 1986/87, 1987a, 1989a, 1990a, b, 1991c, e, 1992a, 1993a, b, 1995a, b, 1997a, b, 1999a, 2002, 2002b, 2003a), MALKMUS & SCHWARZER (2000), MARQUES et al. (1995), MATEO (1988, 1997), MOREIRA et al. (1994), PARGANA et al. (1996), PENNA et al. (1985), PFAU (1988), RAIMUNDO (1995), REBELO & CRESPO (1999), SCHWARZER (1996, 1997c), SEGURADO (1994), TEIXEIRA (1997), TEIXEIRA et al. (1996), VICENTE (1987, 1989), VICENTE & PAULO (1989), VICENTE et al. (1995).

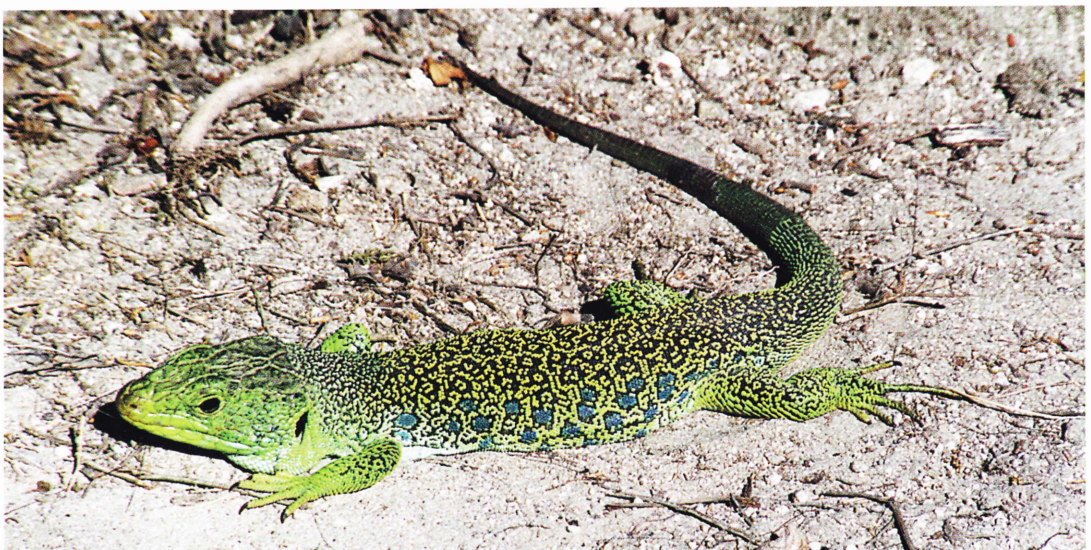


Fig. 171: Male; Serra da Cabreira. Photograph by P. NIEBERGALL.