

EURASIAN LIZARDS

The subfamily Lacertinae was the large sister taxon to the Gallotinae. It was divided into two tribes, the Eurasian Lacertini and the Afro-Asian Eremiadini, but authors now seem to prefer elevating these tribes to subfamily level. The Lacertinae has a primarily Mediterranean distribution that spreads eastward into the Middle East and Central Asia, although there is one Far East Asian and Southeast Asian genus, *Takydromus*, the Oriental grass lizards. The 24 species of

keel-scaled, long-tailed lizards are the only representatives of the Lacertinae throughout most of their range from Amur, Russia, and Japan, to Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Many of the European genera were formerly subgenera of *Lacerta*, which is now reduced to only ten species, including the highly variably patterned Sand Lizard (*L. agilis*), which, although rare and localized in its distribution in the UK, is found across a huge swathe of territory from Europe to

**LACERTINAE****DISTRIBUTION**

Europe, and southwestern, Central, Southeast, and Far East Asia

GENERA

Algyroides, *Anatololacerta*, *Apathya*, *Archaeolacerta*, *Dalmatolacerta*, *Darevskia*, *Dinarolacerta*, *Hellenolacerta*, *Iberolacerta*, *Iranolacerta*, *Lacerta*, *Parvilacerta*, *Phoenicolacerta*, *Podarcis*,

Scelarcis, *Takydromus*, *Teira*, *Timon*, and *Zootoca*

HABITATS

Heathland, sand dunes, grassland, maquis, riverbanks, rocky outcrops and ruins, coastal islands, and rocky mountains

SIZE

SVL 1¾ in (45 mm) Pygmy Keeled Lizard (*Algyroides fitzingeri*) to 10¼ in (260 mm) European Eyed Lizard (*Timon lepidus*)

the Lake Baikal region of Central Asia. Although the range of the Sand Lizard is impressive, it is eclipsed by that of the Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), which occurs across Europe and Asia, from Ireland in the west to Sakhalin Island in the east, and from the Arctic Circle of Scandinavia to northern Spain. Across most of its range this lizard is viviparous, the only live-bearing member of the Lacertinae, but southern French and northern Spanish populations are oviparous.

Among the most attractive species are the male green-bodied, blue-throated Western and Eastern Green Lizards (*L. bilineata* and *L. viridis* respectively) and the green, blue eye-spotted European Eyed Lizard (*Timon lepidus*), but the most ubiquitous European lizards are the numerous species of wall, rock, and ruin lizards (*Podarcis*).



LEFT | The Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) is sexually dichromatic: males are bright green while females, like the one pictured, are primarily brown with black and white ocelli markings.



ACTIVITY

Terrestrial, arboreal, saxicolous, or semi-fossorial; diurnal and heliophilic

REPRODUCTION

Most genera and species are believed to be oviparous, laying 1–4 or up to 23 (Eastern Green Lizard, *Lacerta viridis*) leathery-shelled eggs, with some species of *Darevskia* reproducing parthenogenetically. The most northerly distributed species (Viviparous Lizard, *Zootoca vivipara*) is

viviparous, producing 1–11 neonates, although populations in the south of its range are oviparous, producing 1–13 leathery-shelled eggs

DIET

Invertebrates, including insects and spiders, although large species (*T. lepidus*) prey on smaller lizards

TOP | The Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) is the northern-most and most widely distributed lizard in the world. It is also the only viviparous species in the Lacertinae.

ABOVE | Adult Eyed Lizards (*Timon lepidus*) are the largest European lizards with a body pattern of green and black, with blue ocelli markings on the flanks.