

Captive breeding of the Caspian lizard (*Darevskia capsica*) (Reptilia, Lacertidae)

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Abstract. The Caspian lizard (*Darevskia capsica*) is a recently described endemic of the Hyrcanian forests of Northern Iran. The paper presents new data on the reproductive biology of *D. capsica* obtained in laboratory conditions. Breeding females have a body length of 53.4–64.4 mm and a mass of 2.96–3.60 g. Females produce from one to three clutches per season, each of which contains 1–6 eggs. The length of these eggs is 10.35–13.95 mm, width 6.19–7.59 mm, and weight 0.27–0.45 g. The mass of an entire clutch of eggs is 0.43–1.84 g or 11.94–47.18% of the female's weight. Incubation duration is 55–66 days at a temperature of 25–27°C and 42–49 days at a temperature of 28–30°C, respectively. Newborn lizards have a body length of 24.45–28.56 mm, a tail length of 38.00–53.00 mm and a mass of 0.34–0.53 g. Young females begin laying eggs 319–593 days after their hatching. It is noted that Caspian lizards have reproductive indicators similar to other representatives of the genus *Darevskia*, but are characterized by early puberty and high fertility per season.

Keywords: true lizards, Hyrcanian forests, Iran, captive breeding, fertility

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