

*Mesalina guttulata* (LICHTENSTEIN, 1823)

LC

**Common names:** Small-spotted Lizard, Small-spotted Desert Racer (E), Eremias à gouttelettes (F), Mesalina de anteojos (S).

**Range:** From Morocco (including northern Atlantic Sahara) and

maybe northern Mauritania to Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, encompassing parts of Algeria, Libya, Egypt, and the Middle East. Records from Niger require confirmation while populations from Iran to Pakistan and northwestern India are referable to another species, *Mesalina watsonana* (STOLICZKA, 1872).

**Distribution in Morocco:** Widespread across the rocky Saharan regions of Morocco, extending northeastwards along the Moulouya Valley until 3 km west of Aïn Guettara. There are few records from the Atlantic Sahara, likely due to low sampling effort.

**Altitude:** 300–2,000 m.

**Identification:** Small and relatively flattened lizard, about 50 mm SVL. Head narrow and flattened with a pointed snout and prominent nostrils. Dorsal colouration brown with two dorsolateral lines of white dots bordered with black spots. In some adult individuals, white dots tend to disappear, and only the black spots remain visible. Palpebral disc consisting of two large transparent scales finely bordered with black.

**Habitat:** Rocky and gravel-covered hills, mountains and small rocky wadis. Rocky plains with sparse vegetation. *Mesalina guttulata* occupies more rocky and hilly areas than *M. olivieri* which prefers sandy or silty soils without declivity and big stones.

**Biology:** No hibernation. During the day, active mainly in the morning. Mating usually occurs around early April. Females lay



Fig. 492: *Mesalina guttulata*, male. Boudnib.

D. JABLONSKI

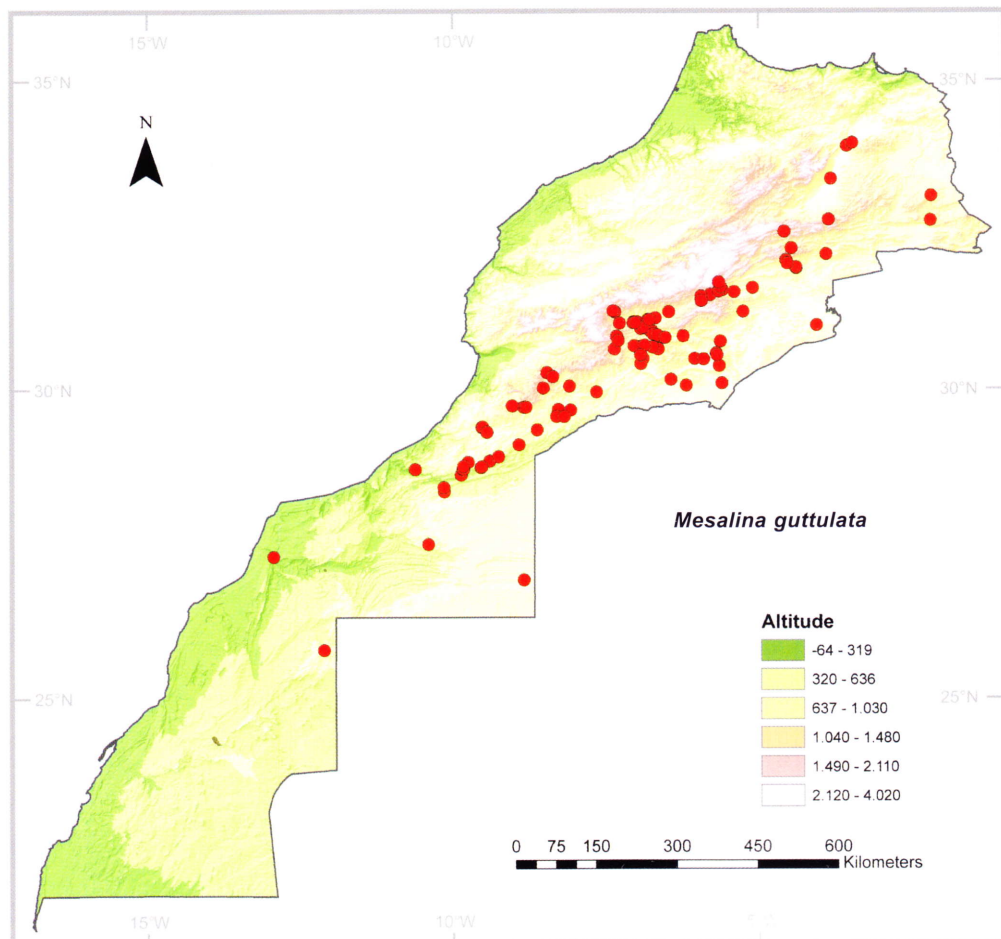




Fig. 493: *Mesalina guttulata*, female. Boulemane.

U. FUENTE GÓMEZ



Fig. 494: *Mesalina guttulata*, gravid female. Morocco.

V. GABARI BOA



◁ Fig. 495: *Mesalina guttulata*, portrait. Guelta Zemmur.  
G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL

clutches of 2–7 eggs. Hatchlings observed in March. The diet consists of aphids, isopods, spiders, beetles, ants, rarely termites (BONS 1959).

**Remarks:** *Mesalina guttulata* may represent a species complex with at least four species including *M. bahaeldini* (GENIEZ 2013, KAPLI *et al.* 2015). There is substantial genetic variation in Morocco but all considered the same species (KAPLI *et al.* 2015).



Fig. 496: Portrait of a male *Mesalina olivieri*. 6 km past Bou-Jerif towards Guelmim.

P. GENIEZ