

A CONCOLOR MORPH IN *PODARCIS ERHARDII RUTHVENI* (WERNER, 1930) FROM ALONISSOS, GREECE

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Abstract

This note presents photographic material and a detailed description of a concolor morph in *Podarcis erhardii* (Bedriaga, 1882) and the first published record of this morph on Alonissos. Data on the observation and a short review of the literature are also given.

Key words: concolor, morph, *Podarcis erhardii*, Alonissos

Introduction

Lizards of the genus *Podarcis* are known for their great color and pattern variation. Concolor morph is a morph in which lizards do not show dorsal or lateral markings and are usually uniformly colored (Arnold et al. 2007). Concolor morphs have been recorded in several *Podarcis* species, such as *P. siculus* (Rafinesque, 1810), *P. carbonelli* Pérez-Mellado, 1981, *P. tiliguerta* (Gmelin, 1789), *P. wagleriana* (Gistel, 1868), *P. bocagei* (Seoane, 1884), *P. liolepis* (Boulenger, 1905), *P. ionicus* (Lehrs, 1902) and *P. peloponnesiacus* (Bibron & Bory, 1833) (Kramer 1941, Sá-Sousa & Harris 2002, Bruschi et al. 2006, Lo Cascio & Pasta 2006, Galan & Vazquez 2010, Van Den Berg 2011, Jablonski & Christophoryova 2016, Tzoras 2019). *Podarcis erhardii* (Bedriaga, 1882) is a widespread species in Greece. It is found on many islands of the Cyclades, the Dodecanese and the Northern Sporades, on Samothraki, Thasos and Euboea, in the Peloponnese and in many parts of mainland Greece (Chondropoulos, 1986). The notable geographic variation in morphology in *P. erhardii* has led to the description of several subspecies in Greece (Poulakakis et al. 2003), out of which *P. e. ruthveni* (Werner, 1930) is restricted to the Northern Sporades. *Podarcis erhardii* is the most abundant and widespread reptile species in the Northern Sporades and inhabits every type of habitat, especially areas with stonewalls. Males of *P. erhardii* are usually bigger than females and exhibit a much greater variation in coloration, with green, olive-green or brown backs and yellow or blue spots, while in the breeding season they can have orange on the neck and abdominal area. Females, on the other hand, are mainly brown with fewer dorsal and lateral markings.

On 3rd June 2020, a concolor morph in a male *Podarcis erhardii ruthveni* was recorded near Patitiri village, on the island of Alonissos (39°09'00"N 23°50'59"E). The animal was observed moving on a stone path near olive groves, where it was photographed. The dorsal coloration of the specimen was

A concolor morph of *Podarcis erhardii ruthveni*

olive-green and did not show the typical dorsal pattern of the species. The ventral area and the neck of the animal was orange, which is typical for a male in breeding season. The rest of the body was olive-green, similar to the dorsal area. The animal also lacked the usual lateral pattern of the species and was uniformly colored, which fits the description of a concolor morph. The habitat (Fig. 2A) consisted of olive groves and stonewalls, where several other *P. erhardii* specimens were observed. All of them exhibited the typical coloration of the species (Fig. 2B). Other reptile species that were found at the same habitat were *Dolichophis caspius* (Gmelin, 1789), *Lacerta trilineata* (Bedriaga, 1886) and *Ablepharus kitaibelii* (Bibron & Bory, 1833).



Fig. 1. The recorded individual of *Podarcis erhardii ruthveni* exhibiting the concolor morph.



Fig. 2. *Podarcis erhardii ruthveni*:
A. Habitat where the concolor morph was recorded.
B. Typical morphs, male and female, from the same area.

According to Arnold et al (2007), concolor morphs occur in some populations of *P. erhardii*, however photographic material or any further information for this report was not reported. More concolor morphs in *Podarcis erhardii* have been observed on Alonissos in the past by the author but were not photographed. Gruber & Schultze-Westrum (1971) have reported that some specimens of *P. erhardii* from Skopelos and Giura island exhibited the ‘*olivacea*’ (or concolor) morph, but without a description or any photographic material. Werner (1930) has also reported a uniformly colored specimen from Skopelos. Although concolor morphs are probably quite rare in other populations of *P. erhardii*, they seem to be more common in the Northern Sporades.

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