



Acanthodactylus maculatus (GRAY, 1838)

LC

Common names: Spotted Fringe-fingered Lizard (E), Acanthodactyle tacheté (F), Lagartija manchada (S).

Range: A wide distribution in northwestern Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and possibly northwestern Libya).

Distribution in Morocco: Common southeast and east of the High Atlas Mountains, especially on the arid plateau and pre-Saharan area. Known also from a few localities north of the Atlas Range, in the Marrakech plain.

Altitude: 200–2,100 m.

Identification: Medium-sized lizard that reaches 6 cm SVL (14 cm including the tail) with relatively stout proportions and rounded snout. As in all members of the *Acanthodactylus pardalis* group, there are usually three subocular scales. Subocular not in contact with the lip, and sometimes in northeastern populations a small quadrangular plate is inserted between the 4th and 5th supralabials (feature proposed as typical of *A. bedriagai* by SALVADOR [1982]). Dorsal scales small and slightly to strongly keeled. Fourteen rows of ventral plates (12 in species belonging to the *A. erythrurus* group). Very variable colouration depending on age and population. On the Hauts-Plateaux, the arid eastern slopes of the High Atlas and in the plain of Marrakech, ground colour sandy brown to reddish with six narrow longitudinal stripes surmounted with light ocelli turning to yellow-greenish in adult males. Between these six ocellated stripes, dark (black in males) stains transversely stretched. This pattern is typical for members of the *A. pardalis* complex. In the *A. erythrurus* complex when they have ocelli, they are laid out on light stripes and frequently, there are only light continuous stripes. Furthermore, animals from these



Fig. 470: *Acanthodactylus maculatus*, female. The specimen has the general look of a *bedriagai*. Plateau of Rekkam. O. JIMÉNEZ ROBLES



Fig. 471: *Acanthodactylus maculatus*, female (above) and male from Bou Arfa.

J.P. GONZÁLEZ DE LA VEGA

areas have a robust, thick and elevated head, sometimes with a small quadrangular plate between the 4th and 5th supralabials. In the north of the Sahara, southeast of the High Atlas, the *A. pardalis* pattern is obscure with a sandy general appearance, dark stains are sometimes entirely absent, and the head is clearly more flattened, even in males. Juvenile individuals have a very contrasting pattern with four longitudinal light lines on the dorsum and a series of aligned light ocelli on each flank. The tail is blueish turning to sandy at some months old (intense vermilion or red in members of the *A. erythrurus* complex, including adult females and subadults).

Habitat: Present in a wide variety of arid habitats including continental sandy areas, dry forests, steppes, and rocky areas. In more humid areas, it is replaced by *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*.

Biology: Diurnal species. Spends much time basking and around bushes, moving quickly to capture prey and escape predators. Uses small holes in the sand, stones or bushes as a refuge. Often found in sympatry with *A. boskianus* and sometimes with *A. erythrurus*.

Remarks: Based on genetic studies (FONSECA *et al.* 2008, TAMAR *et al.* 2016) there are two major lineages occurring in Morocco: one from the Hauts-Plateaux east of the High Atlas, and another from Tafilalet (Erfoud and Merzouga surroundings). Therefore, potentially two species currently assigned to *A. maculatus* occur in Morocco. The Hauts-Plateaux taxon could belong to the Algerian species *Acanthodactylus bedriagai* LATASTE, 1881 while the Tafilalet population corresponds to an undescribed species. Note that the Marrakech plain populations have not yet been included in any genetic study.



Fig. 472: *Acanthodactylus maculatus*, portrait of a female. Plateau of Rekkam. G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL



Fig. 473: *Acanthodactylus maculatus*, male from Sedd el Mejnoun (plain of Marrakech), with a general look close to *bedriagai*. P. GENIEZ