

*Podarcis vaucheri* (BOULENGER, 1905)

LC

**Common names:** Vaucher's Wall Lizard (E), Lézard hispanique d'Afrique du Nord, Lézard de Vaucher (F), Lagartija ibérica de Vaucher (S).



Fig. 520: *Podarcis vaucheri*, adult of the "Algerian" clade. Jebel Sirwa  
R. LEÓN VIGARA

**Range:** Southern Spain, northern and central Morocco, northern Algeria and northern Tunisia.

**Distribution in Morocco:** Mainly in the Atlas and Rif Mountains, but also along the Mediterranean coast, in the Beni-Snassen Massif, and the Debdou area. Known in the past from just a few lowland localities: Forest house of Ben Slimane, 290 m a.s.l. (Marcel VARALDI, pers. comm.), and *Quercus suber* forest of Beni-Abid (near Sidi Bettache), 300 m a.s.l. (Michel THÉVENOT, pers. comm.).

**Altitude:** 0–3,000 m.

**Identification:** Small wall lizard attaining up to about 60 mm SVL but generally less than 50 mm. Head relatively flat and pointed. The dorsal pattern consists of either distinct or reticulating dark and light lines on a brown or green-yellow background. Some specimens largely lack markings and are nearly unicolour. In spring, the dorsum becomes bright green, especially in males but also in a number of females, while it turns to brown in winter. The belly is white but can be orange or brick red in some males and even females. *Podarcis vaucheri* can be distinguished from *Scelarcis perspicillata pellegrini* by the absence of palpebral discs and the lower number of ventrals (six rows instead of 10–12) and from *Atlantolacerta andreanskyi* by the higher number of dorsal scale rows at midbody (more than 50).

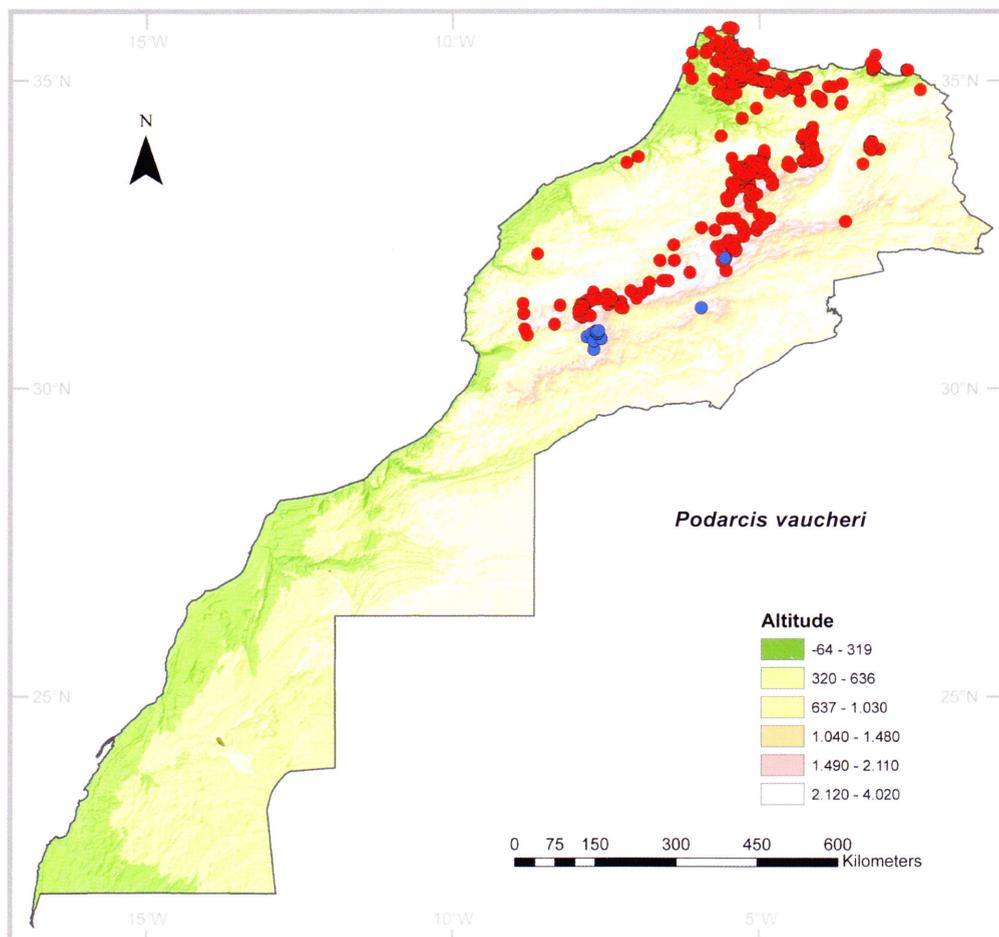




Fig. 521: A: Some males of *Podarcis vaucheri* have a brick red or yellow belly during the breeding season: Jebel Tazzeke (A), Jebel Bouhachem (B).  
G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL



Fig. 522: *Podarcis vaucheri*, adult with regenerated tail. Debdou.

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Fig. 523: *Podarcis vaucheri* (in front) and *Quedenfeldtia trachyblepharus* occupy the same rock crevices in Oukaimeden.

M. BERRONEAU



Fig. 524: *Podarcis vaucheri*, juvenile with typical green tail. Azrou.

M. SASSOE



Fig. 525: Comparison of male (above) and female (below) *Podarcis vaucheri* during the breeding season. Note the difference in head size, colouration and pattern. Jebel Tazzeka.

G. MARTÍNEZ DEL MÁRMOL

**Habitat:** Rocky outcrops in alpine meadows, bushy vegetation and overgrown areas as well as stone walls and rural buildings. Prefers the vicinity of watercourses. Mainly in the humid and subhumid zone, but also occurs in semiarid regions.

**Biology:** Active on the ground but also vertical rock faces. Not all populations are active during the winter. Population density can be very high in places. Females lay 2–3 clutches consisting of up to 5 eggs, which hatch in the course of July. In the High Atlas, *Podarcis vaucheri* take terrestrial prey with a moderate segregation between males and females (CARRETERO *et al.* 2006).

**Remarks:** Once classified as a subspecies of *Podarcis hispanicus*, it was raised to species rank based on genetic data (OLIVERIO *et al.* 2000, BUSACK *et al.* 2005). Research shows *P. vaucheri* to be a species complex with two major mitochondrial lineages, both occurring in Morocco (KALIONTZOPOULOU *et al.* 2011): one in the whole country except the Jebel Sirwa (red circles in the map), the other one inhabiting the Jebel Sirwa (blue circle in the map) nested within an oriental clade along with Tunisian and north-eastern Algerian populations. Both lineages are also found near Agoudal (CAEIRO-DIAS *et al.* 2018) in strict syntopy (DJH and DS pers. obs.) and potentially in other areas east of the Atlas Mountains as well (the population of the Jebel Saghro indicated by another blue circle in the map needs to be confirmed).



Fig. 526: *Podarcis vaucheri*, adult male. Jebel Tazzeka.

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Fig. 527: *Podarcis vaucheri*, adult female. Jebel Bouhachem.

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