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Preliminary phylogenetic relationships of the genus
***Acanthodactylus* Wiegmann, 1834**

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The Old World fringe-fingered lizards of the genus *Acanthodactylus* is the most species rich genus in the Lacertidae currently constituting 41 recognized species. *Acanthodactylus* are ground dwelling, small to medium sized lizards which usually occur in a wide variety of dry habitats. They range from the Iberian Peninsula, through the Sahara and the Sahel, the Middle East, Arabian Peninsula and Cyprus to NW India. The genus is morphologically divided into 8-10 species groups; however, because of great morphological variability among species, the taxonomic status and position of some species is unclear, and the phylogeny of this group is far from resolved. We examined the phylogenetic relationships of the genus based on sequences from 290 individuals representing 36 species from all known species groups. We sequenced 2,423 bp from two mitochondrial (12S rRNA, Cytb) and three nuclear (MC1R, ACM4, c-mos) genes. Our results suggest that the genus is divided into three well-supported clades: Clade A includes 14 species as representatives of the *micropholis*, *grandis*, *blanfordi*, *cantoris*, *opheodurus* and *boskianus* species groups. Clade B includes 14 species of the *tristrami*, *erythrurus* and *pardalis* species groups, and clade C includes the eight species of the *scutellatus* species group. The phylogenetic analyses support much of the previous studies on the genus and reveal new relationships that require further examination.

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