



Podarcis cretensis - Cretan Wall Lizard



Male: GR / Chania, 11.04.2012 - Some males show bright orange throats.

Podarcis cretensis is an endemic species of Crete and the only representative of the genus *Podarcis* on that island. Males can show bright colours in spring with green backs, blue spots on shoulders and yellow, orange or whitish throats.

Remarkably, this species seems to be abundant in the west but absent in the eastern part of Crete (east of the city of Rethimnon); however, it occurs on several islets off Eastern Crete. The reason for this distribution gap is unknown.

Until 2007, these lizards were supposed to be a subspecies of *Podarcis erhardii*. But genetic analysis revealed that it is a separate species closely related to [Podarcis peloponnesiacus](#) and [Podarcis levendis](#).

Being the only small Lacertid on Crete, *Podarcis cretensis* can hardly be confused with other species. Juveniles of [Lacerta trilineata](#) differ from *Podarcis cretensis* by their characteristic light vertebral and dorsolateral lines.



The distribution range of *Podarcis cretensis* is limited to western Crete and some islets off the Cretan coast.



Male: GR / Plakias, 06.04.2012 - During mating season, males frequently show green backs.



Female: GR / Plakias, 06.04.2012 - Females and juveniles may have greenish tails.



The Omalos Plateau (Crete) in early spring - Habitat of *Podarcis cretensis* and *Lacerta trilineata*.

