Timon lepidus - Ocellated Lizard

Being the biggest European Lacertid, the Ocellated Lizard is a highlight of the European fauna. These bold reptiles with conspicuous ocelli pattern are real eye-catchers. However, these shy lizards can be a challenge for photographers; sometimes, so, patience is the key.

The distribution range of Timon lepidus covers the extreme northwestern Italy, Southern France and the major part of the Iberian Peninsula. In southeastern Spain, the species is replaced by Timon nevadensis. Timon lepidus lives in rocky mountain habitats up to 2000 meters as well as in open agricultural landscapes and coastal dunes.

Besides the nominate subspecies, two subspecies are currently recognized:

- Subspecies ibericus; a rather small subspecies with frequently darker pattern. It inhabits the northwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula (but the transition zone between this and the nominate subspecies is poorly known).
- Subspecies oteroii; similar. It has been described for Salvia Island in Galicia.

Timon lepidus can be distinguished from other lizards by the following characters:

- Other green lizards (Lacerta bilineata, Lacerta schreiberi) have no blue ocelli on the flanks.
- Juveniles of Timon lepidus show a pattern of white dots which differs from juveniles of Lacerta bilineata and Lacerta viridis (and from any other small Lacertid in the area).
- Juveniles of Lacerta agilis parsoni may look similar. However, Lacerta agilis parsoni only occurs in high altitude mountain habitats (Pyrenees). Therefore, syntopy of both species is questionable.
- Timon nevadensis has no black reticulation on the back. Juveniles of that species show dark edges on the labels. However, there seems to be a wide transition area.

Distribution ranges of Timon lepidus and Timon nevadensis.
Subsp. lepidus, subadult: E / La Toba (Uérez), 20.09.2018 - Subadult specimens show ocelli on the back which are dispersed in adults.

Subsp. ibenicus, male E / O Pindo (A Coruña), 06.02.2012 - Specimens from northwestern Spain are frequently darker and smaller as the nominate subspecies.

Mountain habitat of Timon lecitus, Psammomisimus edwardsi and Podarcis sicula at Javalambre (E / Teruel).