



Fig. 303: Male of the Artvin Rock Lizard.

E. DUNAYEV


Fig. 304: *Darevskia derjugini silvatica*.

R. ZUEV

spots on the flanks. The belly of males is greenish with blue spots on the outer part of the ventral shields; in females, the belly is yellowish or whitish. In young lizards, the posterior half of the upper side of the tail is coloured bright turquoise-blue.

Distinguishing features: Artvin Rock Lizards differ from Common Rock Lizards, with which they are often found in close proximity, as well as other species of the genus by having fewer femoral pores and distinct white stripes along the sides of the tail.

Distribution and subspecies: The Artvin Rock Lizard is common in the Caucasus, in western and north-eastern Georgia, including Abkhazia and Ajaria, in north-western Azerbaijan and in areas bordering the Caucasus of north-eastern Turkey. In Russia, this species inhabits the south-west of the Krasnodar Region.

In all, six subspecies are recognized, of which three are common in Russia. *Darevskia derjugini silvatica* (BARTENEV & REZNIKOVA, 1931) lives in the piedmont and mountainous parts of the Krasnodar Region, mainly in the territory of the Caucasus Biosphere Reserve and the adjacent spurs of the Greater Caucasus. *Darevskia d. boehmei* (BISCHOFF, 1982) inhabits the western spurs of the Greater Caucasus. The third subspecies, *D. d. abchasica* (BISCHOFF, 1982), is found in the upper forest and subalpine zones of the upper Mzymta River. The validity of these subspecies is not unanimously accepted by experts.

Natural history: The Artvin Rock Lizard is a common forest species, inhabiting coniferous and broadleaved forests. On the northern slope of the Greater Caucasus Range, it is most numerous in beech and mixed deciduous forests. In some places of the southern slope of this range, the species reaches the upper boundary of the forest, and even penetrates into subalpine meadows for 100–150 m. In the Lesser Caucasus, this lizard mainly lives in coniferous forests, where its populations are much larger than in the north of its range. Usually, it settles on the edges of forest glades, along the edges of forest roads and clearings, as well as in river valleys. In some places, it penetrates the subalpine zone to an elevation of 1,800–1,900 m a. s. l. This species is often found on the outskirts of mountain villages in thickets of elderberry, on wicker hedges, in fallen trees, heaps of brushwood, or among scattered stones and boulders.

The Artvin Rock Lizard does not dig burrows. In bad weather and in case of danger, it hides under the roots of trees and bushes, in rotten stumps, heaps of brushwood, rodent holes, and under the loose bark of fallen tree trunks.


Fig. 305: *Darevskia derjugini silvatica* feeding on a fly.

E. SKVORTSOVA

These lizards emerge from their hibernacula between mid-February and early April. Males and juveniles appear first, females follow them two weeks later or more. Some time after the appearance of females, the breeding season begins, accompanied by increased activity in males. Mating usually occurs in May. Females lay clutches of 4–8 eggs between late June and late July. The young measuring 2–2.5 cm in body length hatch at the end of July or in August.

Adults leave for overwintering at the end of August, juveniles apparently a little later, in September. In the North Caucasus, females reach sexual maturity at a body length of about 5 cm, and in Georgia at about 4.2 cm. The longevity is 5–6 years in this species. The diet consists of small beetles, frog-flies, ants, dipterans, acrids, as well as spiders, centipedes, molluscs, and earthworms.

Conservation status: The Artvin Rock lizard is an endemic relict species listed in the Red Data Books of the Adygea and Krasnodar Territory.

Eastern Meadow Lizard

Darevskia praticola (EVERSMANN, 1834)

Figs. 306–310, Map 61

This species was described by Eduard Friedrich EVERSMANN, a German botanist and zoologist teaching at the university of Kazan, in his report on the lizards of the Russian Empire. The type of habitat this species is found in is reflected in both its scientific as well as common name (*praticola* = dwelling in meadows).



Fig. 302: Gravid female of the Artvin Rock Lizard, *Darevskia derjugini abchasica*.

K. M. PRONDZYŃSKA

Natural history: The Dagestan Rock Lizard is found in rocky habitats on dry mountain slopes and in river valleys of the forest and, in part, mountain-steppe zones. Locally, these lizards live on river cliffs and flat forest areas in the foothills. In the mountains, they can be found at about 3,000 m a.s.l. Where they occur in sympatry with Common Caucasian Rock Lizards, they are generally found in open rocky biotopes, whereas the latter species seems to favour areas covered by dense vegetation. Population sizes are large.

These lizards are diurnal, with a double-peak of activity in hot weather. They cease overwintering in late March or early April, and leave for hibernation from the beginning of October. Under favorable conditions in the piedmont of Dagestan, specimens can be active all year around. Clutches consist of 4–5 eggs and are deposited in June–July. The young hatch in August or early September, at a total length of 50–55 mm. Orthopterans, beetles, caterpillars, dipterans and their larvae, caddisflies, spiders, and earthworms constitute their diet.

Conservation status: Populations of Dagestan Rock Lizards appear to be stable and in no need of any conservation action.

Artvin Rock Lizard

Darevskia derjugini (NIKOLSKY, 1898)

Figs. 222, 302–305, Map 60

The common name refers to the type locality, the vicinity of the town of Artvin in north-eastern Turkey. The scientific name of the

species honours Russian geologist, oceanographer and zoologist Konstantin Mikhailovich DERYUGIN or DERJUGIN.

External appearance: Maximum body length 6.5 cm, tail length 10 cm. The head is not flattened.

Masseteric and tympanic shields are usually well defined. The dorsal scales are more or less round, smooth or have weak keels in the posterior half of the body. The rows of femoral pores are short (6–12), and do not reach the knee joint. Males differ from females by having fewer transverse rows of ventrals, but a relatively larger head as well as longer limbs and tail.

The back is brown with small dark spots. On the flanks, there are wide, dark stripes with a scalloped edge, and sometimes, along the vertebral line, there is a poorly defined dark band. Pale stripes extend on the sides of the tail backwards from the base of the hips. Occasionally there are specimens with indistinct, pale rounded



Map 60: *Darevskia derjugini*.