

***Latastia longicaudata* (Reuss 1834) Long-tailed Lizard**

(Figs. 52 and 53)

Lacerta longicaudata Reuss 1834:29. Type locality: "Tor," Sinai, restricted to Massawa, Eritrea, by Schätti (2001). Lectotype: SMF 13601 designated by Mertens (1967).

Latastia longicaudata Boulenger 1887

Arabic: *sihliya taxilat al-dhanb*

Taxonomy: At least 3 subspecies are recognized: *L. l. revoili* (Vaillant 1882) from Ethiopia and Somalia; *L. l. andersonii* Boulenger 1920 from southwest Arabia and the nominate subspecies which inhabits the rest of the species' range and is recorded from Egypt.

Subspecies in Egypt:

***Latastia longicaudata longicaudata* (Reuss 1834)**

Lacerta samharica Blanford 1870

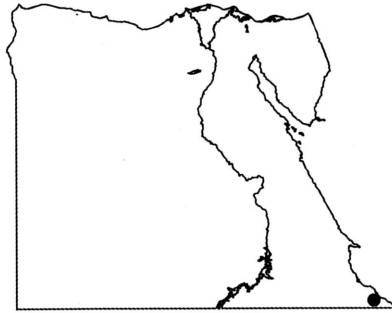
Lacerta sturti Blanford 1870

Latastia longicaudata Anderson 1898, Flower 1933

Latastia longicaudata longicaudata Marx 1968, Saleh 1997

Diagnosis: The largest lacertid lizard found in Egypt. Maximum SVL 110 mm (FMNH 73620; male from Wadi Aideib, Gebel Elba). Tail notably long, average tail/SVL ratio = 2.8 (n=5). Snout long and thick, with 5–7 supralabials (usually 6) anterior to subocular. Nostril surrounded by 3 nasals and the first supralabial. Other head shields normal. Dorsal scales small and granular, slightly but obviously carinated, ranging at mid-body between 52–65, with 6 longitudinal ventral rows; average number of femoral pores 12 (10–13) (Boulenger 1920). Coloration differs considerably from all other Egyptian lacertids. Dorsal surfaces gray-brown, tending to be darker on the posterior part of the body and tail; a narrow dark mid-dorsal

stripe extends from the occiput to posterior back but does not reach the tail base, flanked on each side by two stripes with indistinct darkish spots; both sides of the body from the temporal region to the sides of the tail base have dark and light lateral bars, which are interspersed by some ten



Long-tailed Lizard
(*Latastia longicaudata*)

bluish (males) or yellowish (females) large spots. Limbs and tail same color as back and generally plain with some dark marbling. Venter white.

Variation: Males are more brightly colored than females and have bluish rather than yellowish flank spots. Juveniles have more contrasting coloration but lack the flank spots.

Habitat and ecology: Inhabits well vegetated sandy or gravelly plains and large wadis. In the vicinity of Gebel Elba it is found in *Acacia* scrub habitat where shrubby undergrowth is plentiful. Wanders over large territories but forages mostly within vegetation cover.

Range: A Sahelian species distributed across Africa from Senegal to the Red Sea, south to Zaire and Tanzania.

Distribution in Egypt: Confined to the coastal plain and large wadis on the eastern watershed of Gebel Elba. The locality where Rüppell is said to have collected the type is given by Reuss as “Tor” (Sinai) and is certainly an error (Schätti 2001). This large, conspicuous species has not been reported from any part of Sinai since the type description, nor was it reported from localities intermediate between its known range and Sinai. This error has led many authors to include Sinai as part of the species range (e.g., Anderson 1898, Boulenger 1920, Saleh 1997).

Status and conservation needs: Not known, but the very limited habitat of the species in the Gebel Elba region is under heavy grazing pressure. In Egypt it is Vulnerable. Classified as Least Concern by IUCN (2005).