



Fig. 132: *Acanthodactylus ophiodurus*, Arava valley.

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Acanthodactylus ophiodurus ARNOLD, 1980

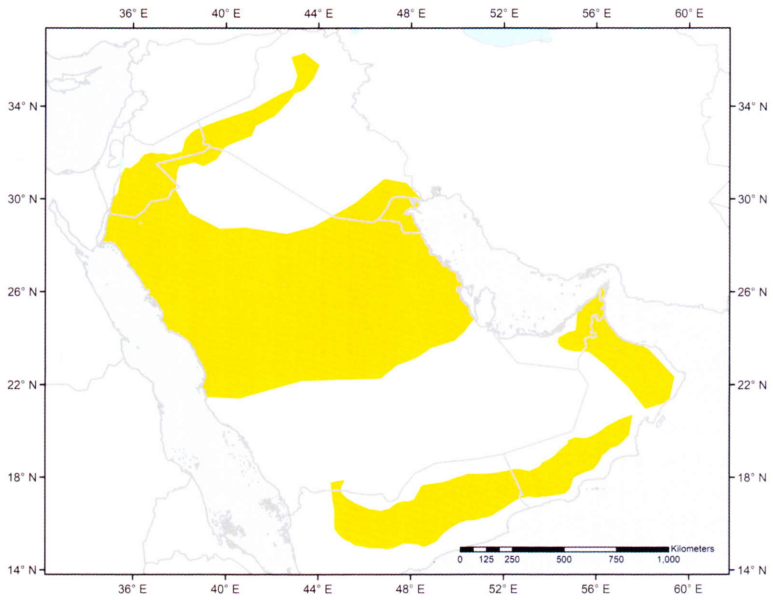
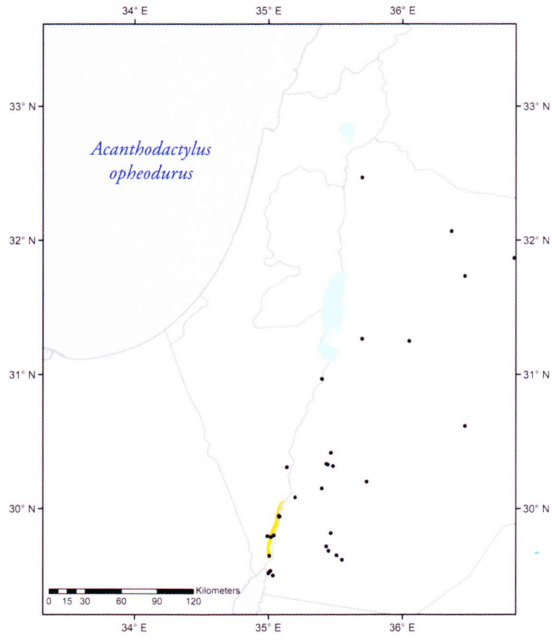
Arnold's fringe-fingered lizard

Hebrew name: *Shnunit Arnold* ("Arnold's fringe-fingered lizard"). The name *Shnunit Haas* ("Haas' fringe-fingered lizard"), is the official name of this lizard in Hebrew. This name, however, is already taken by another species from the Arabian Peninsula (*Acanthodactylus haasi*) for which it is both the scientific and vernacular name.

Recent taxonomic changes: In Israel, it was only recognized as distinct (from *Acanthodactylus boskianus*) towards the late 20th century. Genetic data verified conclusions drawn from morphology.

Size: Up to 240 mm total length, in Israel to ~200 mm, adult SVL 45–62 mm (juvenile measurements unavailable); weight 3.2–7.5 g.

Description: Very similar to but smaller than Bosk's fringe-fingered lizard. The body is brown with five stripes that fade with age. The tail is twice as long as the body. Scales on the back increase in size towards the tail, which is detachable. The underside of the tail is orange in juveniles and females. The male is larger than the female.



Similar species: *Acanthodactylus boskianus* (p. 161) is larger; the median vertebral dark stripe is simple in *A. ophiodurus* but forked in *A. boskianus*.

Natural history and behavior: Inhabits riverbeds and flatlands located in sandy patches in the southern Arava. Active on the ground, mostly in the morning and afternoon, but can be found active midday on very hot days. Its diet consists of arthropods. It is oviparous and the female lays around four eggs per clutch.

Distribution in Israel: Southern Arava sands, with early reports from further north in the Negev has proven to be erroneous and pertaining to *A. boskianus*.

World distribution: Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, and Yemen, also in much of Jordan, southeastern Israel, and Iraq.

Conservation: IUCN Status: In Israel: Data Deficient; Global: Least Concern (stable populations). The IUCN does not identify significant threats to the species, citing only “localized overgrazing” in unspecified parts of the range as threatening processes. However, in Israel this Arava sands endemic is highly threatened by agricultural encroachment, habitat degradation, and other anthropogenic disturbances and, therefore, probably merits a high threat category.



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