

# A new record of Schneider's Skink, *Eumeces schneideri* Daudin, 1802 (Sauria: Scincidae) from Cyprus

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**Abstract.** This is the first report of the presence of *Eumeces schneideri* in northern Cyprus and is the second record from Cyprus. One specimen was collected and is described. The Cypriot population of *Eumeces schneideri* looks quite homogenous: it has a dorsal pattern with weakly developed orange dots or without orange dots in adult specimens, as in the new specimen. The darkened flanks, the two dorsolateral light bands and the presence of a few scattered small orange spots on the hind legs lead us to conclude that the Cypriot population is not identifiable with the known subspecies from the Levant countries. We thus accept that the subspecific status of our specimen is *Eumeces schneideri* ssp.

**Kurzfassung.** Dies ist die erste Meldung des Tüpfelskinks, *Eumeces schneideri*, für das nördliche Zypern, und der zweite Nachweis für die Insel überhaupt. Ein Exemplar wurde gesammelt und wird beschrieben. Die zypriotische Population von *E. schneideri* scheint ziemlich homogen zu sein: Adulttiere haben ein dorsales Zeichnungsmuster mit schwach entwickelten oder – wie bei dem neuen Exemplar – fehlenden orangefarbenen Punkten. Dunkle Flanken, zwei dorsolaterale helle Streifen und das Vorhandensein einiger kleiner, verstreuter orangefarbener Punkte auf den Hinterextremitäten führen uns zu dem Schluss, dass die zypriotische Population nicht mit den bekannten Unterarten aus den Levantländern identisch ist. Wir betrachten daher das von uns untersuchte Exemplar als *Eumeces schneideri* ssp.

**Key words.** Taxonomy, subspecies, Levantine countries, Cyprus, Middle East.

## Introduction

The distribution of the skink *Eumeces schneideri* Daudin, 1802 extends from North Africa through Sinai, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Anatolia and Cyprus to West and Central Asia with a vertical distribution up to 1800 m. In the Levant countries including Egypt, the species comprises three subspecies: *E. schneideri schneideri* Daudin, 1802, *E. schneideri pavimentatus* Geoffroy-St. Hilaire, 1827, and *E. schneideri princeps* Eichwald, 1839 (EISELT 1940, MERTENS 1946, WERNER 1971). It inhabits bushy open places with rocky substrates and gardens, and hides under stones, in holes and in burrows dug by itself or other burrowing animals (BARAN 1977, OSENEGG 1989). In Cyprus it has previously been reported only from two areas, namely from the Platraes-Troodos Mountains and from Ayia Marina in the Paphos District (WERNER 1936, EISELT 1940, MERTENS 1946, CLARK 1973, OSENEGG 1989, SCHÄTTI & SIGG 1989). Since no voucher material is available from previous reports (SCHÄTTI & SIGG 1989, GÖÇMEN et al. 1996), except from that of OSENEGG (1989), the species was considered to be threatened with extinction on the island (GÖÇMEN et al. 1996). Since so little information is available on this rare Cypriot skink, a recent record is briefly presented here.