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New data on fringe-toed lizards of the *Acanthodactylus scutellatus* group in Mauritania

According to CROCHET et al. (2003), five species of the *Acanthodactylus scutellatus* group occur in Mauritania: *Acanthodactylus senegalensis* CHABANAUD, 1918, *A. dumerili* (MILNE EDWARDS, 1829), *A. longipes* BOULENGER, 1918, *A. aureus* GÜNTHER, 1903 and *A. taghitensis* GENIEZ & FOUCART, 1995.

In November 1995 one of the authors (PL) found and photographed a large male of *Acanthodactylus scutellatus audouini* BOULENGER, 1918 (fig. 1), east of Ouadane (ca. 20°59'N / 11°26'W), in the north-eastern Adrar area of Mauritania (fig. 2). This specimen can be identified undoubtedly as *A. s. audouini* by its large size, the strongly



Fig. 1: Male *Acanthodactylus scutellatus audouini* BOULENGER, 1918 from west of Ouadane (Mauritania) (Photo: P. LLUCH).

swollen base of its tail, the large dark spots on its pileus, the strongly contrasted black and disjointed reticulation on its dorsum and its relatively large and carinate dorsal scales. *Acanthodactylus s. audouini* was previously known only from the eastern and central Sahara, (north-eastern Sudan and Egypt in the east to south-eastern Tunisia in the north and eastern Mali in the south-west (CROCHET et al. 2003). The present observation adds a new country (Mauritania) to the range of *A. scutellatus* and extends its distribution 1,000 km towards the West. The only species of the

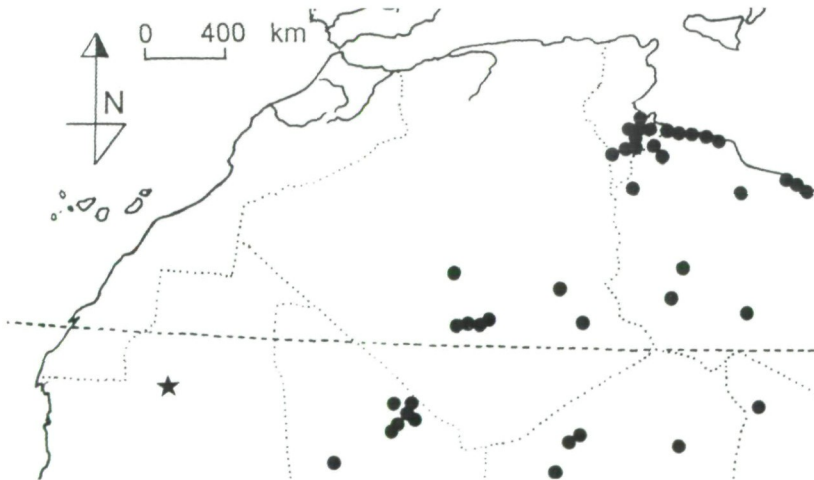


Fig. 2: Western part of the distribution of *Acanthodactylus scutellatus audouini* BOULENGER, 1918 based on CROCHET et al. 2003. The asterisk represents the new Mauritanian locality.



Fig. 3: Adult male *Acanthodactylus taghitensis* GENIEZ & FOUCART, 1995 from Ouan n'Namour, Mauritania (BEV.7785) (Photo: PH. GENIEZ).

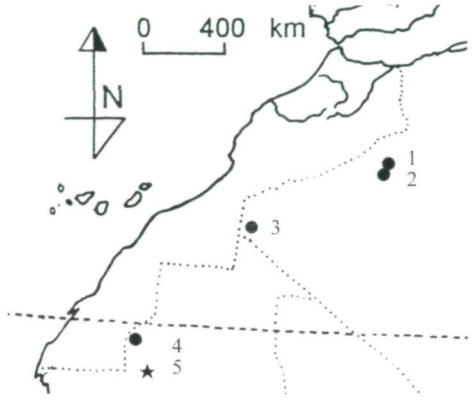


Fig. 4: Distribution of *Acanthodactylus taghitensis* GENIEZ & FOUCART, 1995. The list of localities (new record marked by an asterisk) is available in the text.

Acanthodactylus scutellatus group so far known from the Adrar area was *A. longipes*. With six species, Mauritania became the richest country in terms of representatives of the *Acanthodactylus scutellatus* group.

Acanthodactylus taghitensis is a little known species closely related to *A. aureus* but with a non-coastal distribution. On 29 November 2001 one of the authors (PL) caught an adult male *A. taghitensis* (fig. 3) at Ouan n'Namour, Mauritania, in a reg formation from the Northern Tagenzé of Guelb Richat (21°22'51"N / 11°24'36"W). This specimen is preserved at Montpellier (France) in the collection of the Laboratoire de Biogéographie et Ecologie des Vertébrés de l'École Pratique des Hautes Etudes (n° BEV.7785). The present observation extends the known distribution of *A. taghitensis* 200 km towards the south-east. This species is thus presently known from five localities (fig. 4):

- 5 km from Taghit towards Beni Abbès (Algeria) [30°53'53"N / 2°4'51"W] (GENIEZ & FOUCART 1995, locality 1 in fig. 4);
- 36 km from Taghit towards Beni Abbès (Algeria) [30°39'15"N / 2°11'4"W] (GENIEZ & FOUCART 1995, locality 2 in fig. 4);
- El Gor near Tindouf (Algeria) [27°28'N / 7°56'W], (DONAIRE et al. 2000, locality 3 in fig. 4);
- Fderik (= Fort-Gouraud) (Mauritania) [22°41'20"N / 12°42'34"W] (CROCHET et al. 2003, locality 4 in fig. 4);

- Northern Tagenzé, Ouan n'Namour (Mauritania) [21°22'51"N / 11°24'36"W], (present work, locality 5 in fig. 4).

Acanthodactylus taghitensis may be present in eastern parts of Western Sahara (under Moroccan administration) as well but no records are available for this country yet (GENIEZ et al. in press).

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