

Podarcis tiliguerta (GMELIN, 1789)

Tyrrhenian Wall Lizard · (Italian name: lucertola tirrenica)

Small lizard, short and deep head, rounded dorsal scales, smooth or only slightly keeled. Light supra-ciliary stripes normally present in both sexes, sometimes interrupted by dark spots. Nearly always dark spots are present on the throat. Dorsal coloration variable: adult males mainly greenish, females mainly brownish. Often bluish spots are present on the flanks, in males also near the forelimbs. Males more or less reticulated. Between the dorsal-lateral light stripes a darker one can be found, entire or formed by a series of spots. The dorsal reticulation, when present, normally is not excessively marked, and streaking is visible. Ventral coloration varies from whitish to yellowish, bluish, greenish and reddish, often brilliant opalescent. In micro-insular populations this variability can increase, with many iperchromatic or melanic forms, variability can be high even within a population. Concolor individuals have been also observed. Total length in adult males up to 25 cm; SVL 6.5 cm. Females are generally smaller.

P. tiliguerta is easily distinguishable from *P. sicula* because of the spotted throat, and from *A. bedriagae* because of the flattened head and body of the latter.

Distribution, zoogeography and taxonomy: Corsica and on many satellite islands (about 50); Sardinia, and on many satellite islands (about 90) (DELAUGERRE & CHEYLAN, 1992; POGGESI et al., 1996).

P. tiliguerta occupies a great variety of habitats, from micro-insular to montane ones. The lizard is found on the Mount Cinto (Corsica) and on Mt. Gennargentu (Sardinia) at 1800 m, but higher population densities are observed below 1500 m. ARNOLD & BURTON (1978) report that *P. tiliguerta* seems to prefer dry, rocky or stony habitats, while *P. sicula* prefers grassy and cultivated areas, and is also often found close to human settlements. The smallest micro-insular habitat where



the Tyrrhenian Wall Lizard occurs is the Isolotto Settentrionale dei Paduleddi (N Sardinia), an islet of 1562 m² and 12 m elevation (CESARACCIO & LANZA, 1984), as well as on the small Îlot du Chêne (1500 m²; 15 m elevation). DELAUGERRE & CHEYLAN

(1992) in 1985 observed on the latter islet a very small number of individuals, so that at present the natural extinction of this population is supposed to have happened.

What is said about the other endemics, *Algyroides fitzingeri* and *Archaeolacerta bedriagae*, is also valid for *Podarcis tiliguerta* (LANZA, 1983). Autochthony of this species is confirmed by the wide distribution shown on the satellite islands of Corsica and Sardinia (DELAUGERRE & CHEYLAN, 1992; POGGESI et al., 1996). Corsican and Sardinian populations are greatly differentiated (CAPULA, 1996), denoting a very high isolation level. Some doubt still exist about the true affinities of this taxon. HARRIS (1999), on the basis of molecular systematic studies, includes *P. tiliguerta* in the "Western Islands" group together with the Maltese *P. filfolensis* and the Balearic endemics *P. lilfordi* and *P. pityusensis*. OLIVERIO et al. (2000) indicates *P. tiliguerta* affine to the Aeolian *P. raffonei*, while CAPULA (1994a) strictly related the latter to the Sicilian *P. wagleriana*.

Many of the micro-insular populations have been raised to the subspecific level based on chromatic and morphological characters. Within the circum-Sardinian islands, ssp. *toro* (MERTENS, 1932a) of Toro Island (the first infraspecific taxon described for the species) and ssp. *ranzii* (LANZA, 1967) of Molarotto Island (E Sardinian) were described, while among those of Corsica, ssp. *eiselti* (LANZA, 1972) of the islets Pietri-caggiosa and Maestro Maria (Cerbicali Archipelago); ssp. *grandisonae* (LANZA, 1972) of Vacca Islet, the melanic ssp. *maresi* (LANZA, 1972) of Toro Grande and Toro Piccolo islands, all belonging to the same archipelago; ssp. *granchii* LANZA & BRIZZI (1974) of the islets Poraggia Grande and Poraggia Piccola (Sanguinarie Islands); ssp. *pardii* LANZA & BRIZZI (1974) of Giraglia Island; ssp. *rodulphisimonii* BRIZZI & LANZA (1975) of the islets Finocchiarola, Di Mezzo and Di Terra (NE Corsica); ssp. *sammichelii* LANZA (1976) of the islets Porro and Locca (Sanguinarie Islands); ssp. *contii* LANZA & BRIZZI (1977) of Piana di Cavallo Island. Besides the above-mentioned populations, GUILLAUME (1997a) suggests that also the following deserve subspecific description: Ziglione, San Bainso, Bruzzi Medio, Faraglione di Gattaghia, Cavallo and Lavezzi islands.

Biology and ecology: CAPULA & LUISELLI (1994a) recently studied the trophic ecology of *P. tiliguerta* in a Mediterranean habitat of central Sardinia, observing that the main prey are Diptera (16.4 %), spiders (14.7 %), ants (11.5 %), Coleoptera (8.2 %) and Orthoptera (7.4 %). Similar observations have been made on some Corsican populations, where the preferred prey are Diptera (22.9 %), Formicidae (20.6 %), Homoptera (13.7 %), spiders (9.2 %) and larvae of insects (8 %) (PÉREZ-MELLADO & CORTI, 1993). Little data is available on the feeding habits of micro-insular populations: KLEMMER (1972) reports insects and Isopoda as prevailing prey of the Sardinian Toro Island population. Commensalism relationships between *P. tiliguerta* and the Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonora*), nesting on this island, have been observed (FADDA & MEDDA, 2001).



Fig. 77: *Podarcis tiliguerta*, Col de Verghiu, Corsica, France.

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Fig. 78: *Podarcis tiliguerta*, ♀, Corsica, near Verghiu and Albertacce, ca. 2100 m. M. DIECKMANN



Fig. 79: *Podarcis tiliguerta* pairing, Asinara Island, NW Sardinia.

C. CORTI

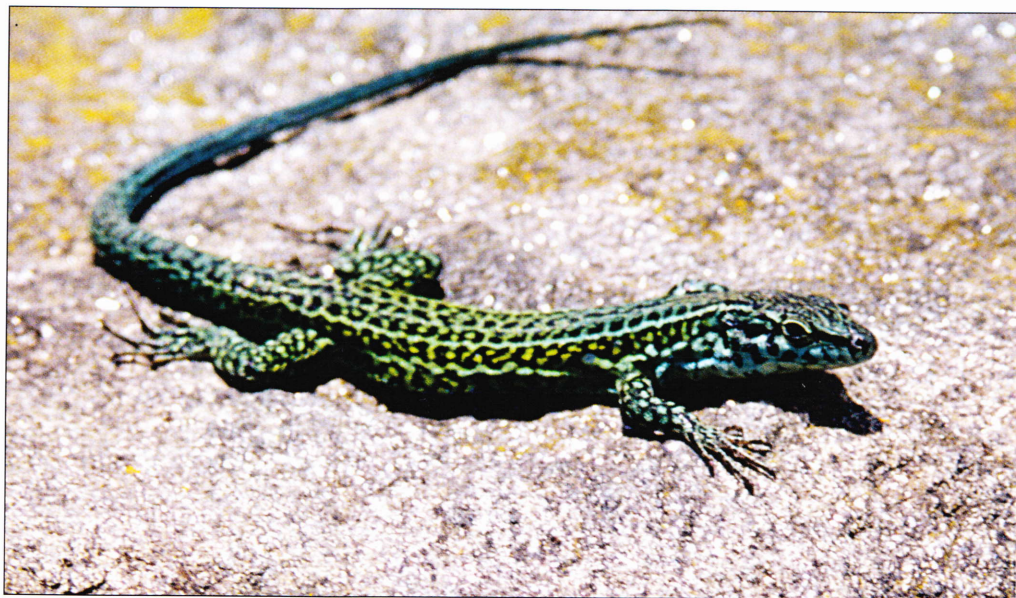


Fig. 80: *Podarcis tiliguerta*, ♂, Asinara Island, NW Sardinia.

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Fig. 81: Habitat of *P. tiliguerta* and *A. fitzingeri*, Asinara Island, NW Sardinia.

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DELAUGERRE & CHEYLAN (1992) observed in Galeria (Corsica), where the Tyrrhenian Wall Lizard and *P. sicula* are in competition, a population density of 40–60 individuals/ha; while in a *Quercus ilex* forest in Capronale 700–870 ind/ha and 1700–2180 ind/ha on Lavezzi Island.

In spring 6–12 whitish eggs are laid (10–16 mm).