

Records of Horvath's Rock Lizard (*Iberolacerta horvathi*) from the Notranjsko podolje region (central Slovenia)

NAJDBE HORVATOVE KUŠČARICE
(*IBEROLACERTA HORVATHI*) NA OBMOČJU
NOTRANJSKEGA PODOLJA

Anamarija ŽAGAR¹, Griša PLANINC², Miha KROFEL³

¹Ul. Bračičeve brigade 10, SI-2310 Slovenska Bistrica, Slovenia;

E-mail: anamarija.zagar@gmail.com

²Župančičeva 30, SI-6330 Piran, Slovenia;

E-mail: grisa.planinc@guest.arnes.si

³Oddelek za biologijo Biotehniška fakulteta, Večna pot 111, SI-1000 Ljubljana;

E-mail: mk_lynx@yahoo.co.uk

In July 2006, a survey on the distribution of reptiles was carried out in the Notranjsko podolje region. Altogether, 7 species were registered. Most interesting were the finds of Horvath's Rock Lizard (*Iberolacerta horvathi*) whose distribution in Slovenia is relatively poorly known. Individual lacertids were captured or approached to a close distance and determined by the position of supranasal, frontonasal and rostral scales, according to the available determination keys (Tome 1999, Arnold 2004, Mršić 1997). Altogether, we found 23 individuals of Horvath's Rock Lizard at 6 localities around Cerknica, Rakek, and Planina: 6 males, 5 females, 8 adults (undetermined sex), 1 subadult, and 3 juveniles. We found them on rocky grounds in karst terrain, on walls of ruins and in a dry riverbed. The altitude of the localities ranged from 458 to 640 m and all of them were located in the same UTM square – VL47. At one location we captured both Horvath's Rock Lizard and Common Wall Lizard (*Podarcis muralis*) on the same wall. These data show that Horvath's Rock Lizard may be relatively common in the Notranjsko podolje region and that it also occurs at lower altitudes than at the minimum (650 m a.s.l.) reported by Tome (1996).

Horvath's Rock Lizard is a relict endemic species of the Alpine-Dinaric mountain range. It occurs in western Croatia, western Slovenia, north-

eastern Italy, western Austria and southern Germany (Gasc *et al.* 1997). It is one of the least known species of lacertids in Slovenia. Previously it had been assumed that its distribution is limited to a high mountainous regions of the Julian Alps, Trnovski gozd and Mt. Snežnik (Brelj 1954, Tome 1996, Mršić 1997) and it is only in recent years that specimens have also been found outside this range in the Dinaric mountains (Tome 2001; V. Cafuta, A. Kapla, F. Kljun, M. Krofel, G. Planinc, S. Polak and A. Žagar, unpublished data). Thus the species may be much more widespread throughout the Dinaric range in Slovenia than suggested by current data, and additional surveys are needed.

Due to the similarities in coloration and habitat preferences of *I. horvathi* and *P. muralis*, it is usually necessary to catch an individual to determine the species. As it was thought in the past that Horvath's Rock Lizard is limited to the high regions of the Alps and Dinaric Mts., this species has often not been considered an option when determining lizards in the lower regions of the Dinaric range. Therefore some of the finds recorded as *P. muralis* might actually be *I. horvathi*. We recommend that additional care should be taken when determining the small lacertids, and that the position of snout scales should be inspected whenever possible. We also call attention to the fact that both species can occur sympatrically at the same locality. Therefore, each individual should be examined separately.

Literature

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