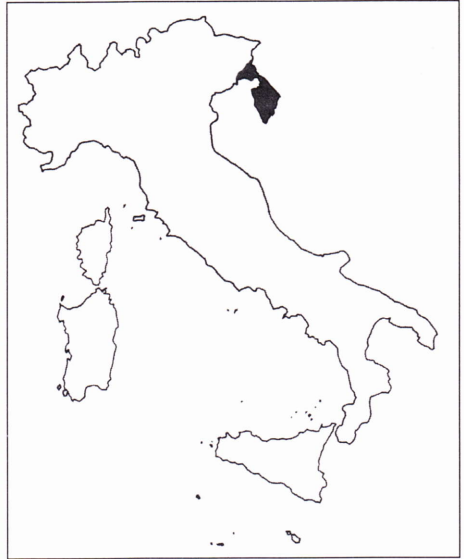


Algyroides nigropunctatus (DUMÉRIL et BIBRON, 1839)Dalmatian *Algyroides* · (Italian name: *algiroide magnifico*)

Relatively small and slender, but big if compared to the other *Algyroides*. Easy to be distinguished from the other sympatric lizards. Dorsal scales are big, blunt and strongly keeled, giving this lizard a rough look. Lateral scales are smaller. The dorsal coloration varies from reddish-, hazel- or grey-brown, olive-green to blackish, often more or less regularly scattered with dark spots. In juveniles and sub-adults the dorsal coloration is generally darker. Ventral parts in males from orange to red, this coloration often reaches the flanks. Female ventral parts are yellow-greenish. Sometimes whitish spots are present on flanks and lateral parts. On limbs the spots look like black bordered small ocelli. Throat is light blue-greenish in females, dark blue or blue in adult males, more evident during mating season. Total length of males up to 21 cm, SVL up to 7 cm. Females are generally smaller.

Distribution, zoogeography and taxonomy:

The Dalmatian *Algyroides* is a Balkan species, distributed along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea from northeastern Italy to continental Greece and Ionian islands. In NE Italy it has been recorded in the Carnic regions of Gorizia and Trieste, to the southern border of the Julian Pre-Alps. It has also been recorded for western-coastal and central Croatia, on the islands of Krk, Cres, Rab and Losinj; in Western Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, for some areas of southern Serbia, centralwestern Macedonia, Albania and on the Sazan Island; north- and centralwestern Greece, and on the Ionian islands of Kerkyra, Vido (or Ptychia), Paxi, Antipaxi, Lefkada, Ithaki, Kefalonia and Zakynthos, in the three latter islands *A. nigropunctatus* is sympatric with *A. moreoticus*.



Many authors assert that the actual distribution pattern of the Dalmatian *Algyroides* is relict, but DZUKIC & PASULJEVIC (1979), hypothesized that this lizard is at present spreading in the Balkan area; LAPINI et al. (1998) points out that probably this species occupied northeastern Italy during the Holocene, after the Würm glaciation.

Eurytopic species that can be observed in shrubby stony habitats, on stone-walls, even close to houses. ARNOLD (1987) hypothesized that it was primarily linked to wood-

en habitats, even if it shows to also be well-adapted to open ones. On the coastal zones of Albania (Island of Sazan included) this *Algyroides* is found in the Mediterranean calcicole vegetation, characterized by *Euphorbia dendroides*, *Phlomis fruticosa*, *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Crithmum maritimum* and *Urginea maritima*. In the inner part of the country the lizard is found on stony grounds close to *Quercus macrolepis*, *Carpinus orientalis* and *Ulmus campestris* woods; as well as in areas cultivated with olive trees. *A. nigropunctatus* has also been observed along forest paths and close to water sources (HAXHUI, 1991). In the coastal hills of central Dalmatia it occurs in Mediterranean and supra-Mediterranean vegetation belts, reaching the woodlands characterized by *Pinus nigra* (on the Adriatic side) and by *Carpinus orientalis* (on the eastern side) (SCHMIDTLER, 1999).

Usually present at low and medium elevation (up to 600–700 m) in the southern part of its distribution range it can be found up 1200–1400 m (Monodendri and Papingo, Epirus; Ujanik and Valbona, Albania).

The Italian populations are referred to the nominal form. The populations of Kefalonia and Ithaki (Ionian Islands, Greece) have been referred to ssp. *kephallithacius* KEYMAR, 1986.

Biology and ecology: Studies on the ecology and biology of this species are relatively rare. Only little information exists on the feeding behavior of *A. nigropunctatus*, mainly referring to captive individuals. In nature the Dalmatian *Algyroides* seems to feed on insects and spiders. GRBAC et al. (1998b) report, for Cres Island, Araneae as the main prey. ARNOLD (1987) observed a preference for shaded habitats and suggests that this species could have lower activity body temperature when compared with the other sympatric lacertids. During the hottest season the activity of this lizard become bimodal, with a break around midday. BEJAKOVIC et al. (1996) in the Lake Skadar region (Montenegro) observed that *A. nigropunctatus* is less “generalist” in habitat choice than the sympatric *P. muralis*. HAXHUI (1991) noticed for Albania a general low population density, except for the western part of the Sazan Island, where 4–5 individuals per 20 m² have been observed. This author also noticed that *A. nigropunctatus* is never found in syntopy with *Podarcis muralis*, despite the latter being the most common lizard in Albania. BEJAKOVIC et al. (1996) observed both species occurring on the small Bisage Island (2.8 ha surface, Lake Skadar), but it is the only case among these lacustrine islands. Also LAPINI et al. (1998) found that in Italy the two species are frequently syntopic. In the Rosandra Valley *A. nigropunctatus*, *Podarcis sicula* and *P. melisellensis* have been observed in syntopy (R. SINDACO, pers. obs). The bright coloration of males seems to be related with high territoriality. On Kerkyra Island, MERTENS (1960; 1961) observed that on stony walls a single male can occupy a territory of about 6 to 10 m that is shared with many females. SCHIMMENTI & FABRIS (2000) observed on Krk Island (Croatia) a gregarious behavior of the species, with groups formed by 2 males and 3–5 females. From 2 to 4 relatively big eggs are laid between the end of spring and the beginning of summer (BEJAKOVIC et al., 1996). A second deposition can take place during summer.



Fig. 33: *Algyroides nigropunctatus*, Cres Islands, Croatia.

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Fig. 34: *Algyroides nigropunctatus*, Beli, Cres Islands, Croatia.

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Fig. 35: *Algyroides nigropunctatus*, Val Rosandra, Trieste.

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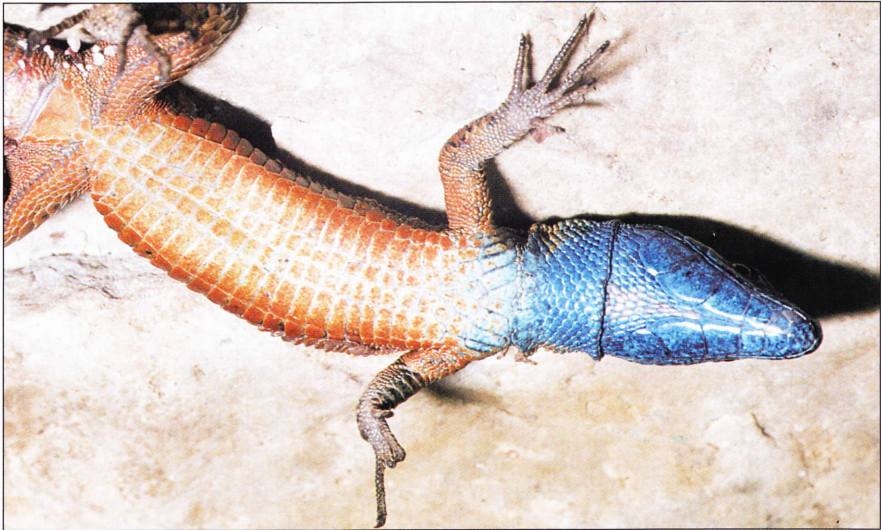


Fig. 36: *Algyroides nigropunctatus*, belly coloration, Cres Islands, Croatia.

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