



Fig. 233: *Mesalina brevirostris*, Delma Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE.



Fig. 234: *Mesalina brevirostris*, Marawah Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE.











*Mesalina brevirostris* BLANFORD, 1874  
Short-snouted Sand Lizard

**Synonymy**

*Eremias brevirostris* – BOULENGER, 1887

*Eremias bernoullii* SCHENKEL, 1901 (*vide* SMITH 1935)

*Eremias brevirostris brevirostris* – HAAS & WERNER, 1969

*Mesalina brevirostris microlepis* ANGEL, 1936

**Range.** Arabia including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, and also Lebanon, Jordan, Sinai, Iraq, Syria, Turkey (south-eastern Anatolia), south-western Iran and Pakistan.

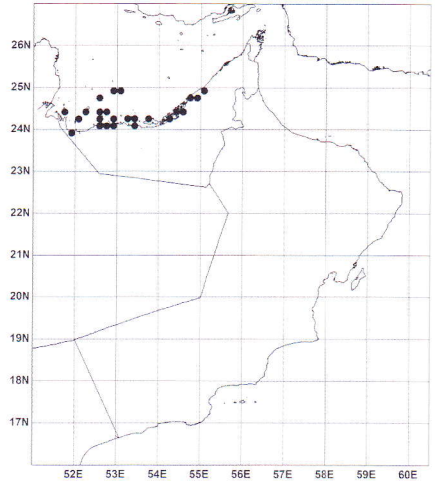
**Size.** Up to 55 mm SVL, with tail approximately 1.5 to 2 times body length.

**Identification.** A small, relatively robust lacertid with a short snout and non-pectinate fingers. The ground-colour is variable from light grey to brown, covered fairly uniformly with darker brown and white spots. The brown and white spots may be associated into ocelli. The brown spots on the flanks and sides of the tail may be larger than those on the back. The spotting extends onto the hind-limbs, but the fore-limbs are usually uniform, as is the top of the head.

Belly scales are squarish, tending to be about the same width across the belly, with 12 scales in the longest row.

**Biology.** A diurnal, active-hunting lizard. Food consists of insects, including ants, spiders, wasps and beetles. It is tolerant of high temperatures and alternates hunting with time spent in the shade. In some areas of beach crest they may occur in relatively dense populations. They have been observed clearing burrow entrances and hence may cover their burrows when they vacate them.

In captivity (Lebanese specimens), five clutches per year, with one to six eggs (average 3.9), were produced, which hatched after 59 days at 28–29 °C. Hatchlings measured 23–38 mm. The young reach sexual maturity within one year. In the UAE it may breed throughout the year.



**Habitat.** Typically found in relatively mesic coastal areas along the UAE's Arabian Gulf coastline and islands. It often forages on the strand line and in sabkhas and saline plains with succulent halophytic vegetation behind the beach crest. Outside the UAE, it may inhabit hard gravel or rocky plains and wadi beds, sometimes far inland.

**Distribution.** Not recorded from Oman. In the UAE, it is widespread in coastal areas along the Arabian Gulf from Sharjah westwards to the Saudi Arabian border. It has also been recorded on many Gulf islands including Abu al Abyad, Al Aryam, Al Yasat North, Arzanah, Dalma, Ghasha, Jenanah, Marawah, Muhayyat South, Reem, Sir Bani Yas, Umm al Hatab, Umm al Qassar, Umm Kirkum, Ushsh, and Zirku.

**Pertinent references.** ANDERSON 1999, DISI *et al.* 2001, IN DEN BOSCH 2001, ROSS 1988, SOORAE 2004.