



Photo 108: *Acanthodactylus busacki* adult male in breeding colours. 22 km south-west from Tantan-Plage towards Tarfaya (Morocco).

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Photo 109: *Acanthodactylus busacki* adult male. 9 km north of Tamri towards Essaouira (Morocco). This is the northernmost known record for this species.

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Photo 110: *Acanthodactylus busacki* hatchling. 16 km from the road Taroudant–Ouarzazate towards Irherm.

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*Acanthodactylus busacki* SALVADOR, 1982

**English:** Busack's fringe-toed lizard;

**Spanish:** Lagartija de El Aaiún;

**Hassanya:** Zelam

**World distribution.** – Maghrebi endemic, present in the southwest of Morocco, the north of the Western Sahara and the *Hammada* of Tindouf (Argelia/Mauritania).

**Biogeographical affinities.**

– Palearctic (Macaronesian aff.).

**Distribution in the Western Sahara.**

– It can be found along the northern coast, from the border with Morocco (27°30'N) to Boujdour. In the Saguia al Hamra, it penetrates until the *Hammada* of Tindouf, reaching the Algerian border and approaching Mauritania.

**Subspecies in the Western Sahara.** – No described subspecies.

**Preferred habitat.** – Small lizard associated with the stony plains of the region; on occasions it is abundant in areas covered with macaronesian type vegetation such as succulent euphorbias (*Euphorbia* spp) or argan shrubs (*Argania spinosa*).

**Observations.** – A member of the *pardalis* species group. It is a robust, plump, and very fast species, with a relatively long tail whose dorsal scales are strongly keeled. Its coloration is very variable; one can find individuals with longitudinal white lines with dark borders together with others that have yellowish ocelli surrounded by black, or others which have a very contrasted marbled pattern. Males can have the front half of the body reddish and the rear half a bluish colour. Juveniles have, as the other species of the genus in the Western Sahara, except *A. boskianus*, a bluish tail.

**Conservation.** – In the Western Sahara and in the world, *Lower risk-least concern* (LR-lc).

**Important references.** – SALVADOR (1982); BONS & GENIEZ (1996); SCHLEICH et al. (1996); DONAIRE et al. (2000); GENIEZ et al. (2000).

