

Spindly

Eremias andersoni, a New Lizard (Reptilia, Lacertilia, Lacertidae) from Iran

I. S. Darevsky and N. N. Shcherbak

Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences, Leningrad USSR
and Institute of Zoology, Academy of Sciences, Kiev, Ukrainian SSR

ABSTRACT—*Eremias andersoni* is a new species from Descht-i-Kevir desert (Iran). It differs from the closely related psammophile species *E. fasciata*, *E. lineolata* and *E. scripta* by the absence of uninterrupted rows of granules between frontal and frontoparietal shields.

* * *

Among herpetological materials collected in autumn 1974 by the senior author in northern Iran were specimens of a new lizard species, genus *Eremias*, described below. This species is named after an American herpetologist, Steven C. Anderson, who has contributed greatly to the study of the herpetofauna of Iran and Afghanistan.

Eremias andersoni sp. nov.

Holotype.—Iran National Museum of Natural History (MMTT) 1671, subadult male, Descht-i-Kevir desert, 40-45 km east of Darja-i-Nimek lake (34°30' N, 52°40' E), Iran, by I. S. Darevsky, 18 October 1974.

Paratypes.—Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences, USSR (ZIL) 18715 and 18716, subadult male and female, same data as holotype.

Diagnosis.—Ventrals in 13-14 oblique longitudinal series; subocular in contact with edge of mouth; frontal and supraoculars not separated by a complete row of granules; nostril situated among three nasals and widely separated from supralabials; femoral pores series separated by space not greater than one-fourth length of one row; supracaudals with weakly-developed ridges; digit four of hind limbs without long flat projecting scales.

Description of holotype.—Head and body moderately depressed. Snout pointed with swollen nasals, as long as broad. Anterior head shields smooth and convex; nasals in contact behind the rostral, the suture

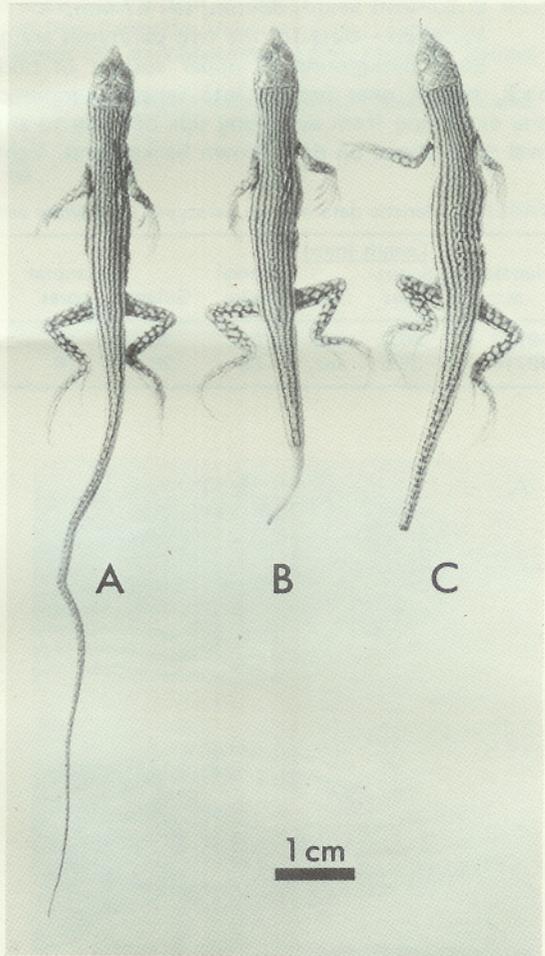


FIGURE 1. *Eremias andersoni* sp.nov., (A), Holotype, MMTT N° 1671 (B,C), paratypes, ZIL N° 18715, 18716.

between them about 1/2 length of frontonasal; prefrontals 1½ times as long as broad, forming a median suture; frontal as long as its distance from end of snout, slightly more than twice as long as broad, narrow behind; parietals as broad as long; small triangular occipital. Two large, approximately equal supraoculars space in front of first filled by four small shields and a few granules; a small band-like posterior supraocular; frontal not separated from supraoculars by granules; 5 superciliaries; a series of granules between supraoculars and superciliaries. Three nasals, lower in contact with three supralabials, not touching rostral; subocular keeled below eye, bordering mouth, resting between eighth and ninth supralabials. Temporal scales granular, smooth; tympanic shield present. Lower eyelid translucent, covered with small scales. Five pairs of chin shields, anterior three in contact on the midline. Twenty-nine gular scales in a straight line between symphysis of chin shields and collar. Gular fold and collar indistinct. Scales granular, smooth, 57 across middle of body. Ventral plates longer than broad, forming oblique longitudinal series. Preanal region with an enlarged median plate posteriorly; 15/16 femoral pores on each side barely reaching inner surface of knee. Subdigital lamellae unicarinate, 32 under fourth toe. Upper caudal scales with weakly developed ridges; 28 scales around ninth-tenth ring of tail.

Snout-vent length 38 mm, tail 87 mm.

Variation.—Data for the two paratypes are given in Table 1.

Basic background of upper surface of body sandy gray. Nine dark brown stripes along back, medial ones broken into separate, more or less wavy segments, some passing onto tail, one extending from eye along side of body to anterior half of tail. Limbs with light rounded or oval spots above on dark brown background. Venter white.

TABLE 1. Meristic data on two paratypes of *Eremias andersoni*.

Number, sex	Length (mm)		Dorsal scales	Gulars	Femoral pores	Ventrols		Scales around 8-10th ring of tail
	Snout-vent	Tail				Longitudinal	Transverse	
18715, ♂	40.0	inc.	56	30	16	14	28	26
18716, ♀	38.5	inc.	58	28	16	14	29	28

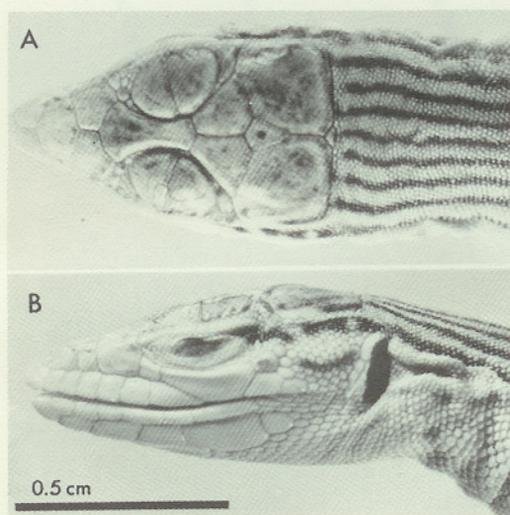


FIGURE 2. *Eremias andersoni* sp. nov., ZIL N° 18715 (A), dorsal view of head; (B), side view of head.

Habitat.—All specimens of *Eremias andersoni* were collected on one of the isolated areas of semianchored sands situated in the stony desert of Descht-i-Kevir. These lizards were numerous in the lower areas between dunes, as well as on the sands with more developed grassy and subshrubby vegetation. They climb well on shrubs and may jump from one branch onto another. Their way of living reminds one of such typically psammophile species as *Eremias scripta* (Strauch) and *E. fasciata* Blanford. Of other lizard species only *Phrynocephalus maculatus* Anderson have been found sympatrically with *E. andersoni*.

Remarks.—Morphologically the new species is closest to *Eremias fasciata* found in northeastern Iran. But in *E. andersoni*, in contrast to *E. fasciata*, the frontal and frontoparietal shields are not separated from the supraoculars by uninterrupted rows of granules (Fig. 2). Also in *E. fasciata* the 4th toe has a complete row of sharply pointed lateral scales that are indistinct in *E. andersoni*.

By the former character, *E. andersoni* clearly differs, also from the closely similar psammophile species *E. scripta* (Strauch), which has not yet been found for certain in Iran (Anderson, 1968, 1974).

Eremias lineolata (Nikolsky) differs from *E. andersoni* in particular by the presence of well-developed ridges on the supracaudal scales and the wider space between rows of femoral pores (one row 2.6 to 5.5 times as long as this space).

As was shown by Shcherbak (1974), the palaeartic genus *Eremias* can be divided into 5 subgenera. The psammophile species *E. fasciata* and *E. scripta*, as well as some others, are referable to the subgenus *Rhabderemias* Lantz, 1928, which has, most notably, an uninterrupted row of granules between supraoculars and frontal and frontoparietal shields. In a number of characters *E. andersoni* is also close to this subgenus, but its subgeneric position is not yet clear.

LITERATURE CITED

- Anderson, S. C. 1968. Zoogeographic analysis of the lizard fauna of Iran, p. 305-371. In Fisher, W. B. (ed.). The Cambridge history of Iran, vol. I, The land of Iran. Cambridge University Press, London.
- . 1974. Preliminary key to the turtles, lizards, and amphisbaenians of Iran. *Fieldiana: Zoology*, 65(4):27-44.
- Shcherbak, N. N. 1974. The lizard genus *Eremias* of the Palearctic. Publishing house "Naukova dumka," Kiev. 296 pp. (In Russian).

Accepted 5 Aug. 1977