

EUROLIZARDS

Lacerta trilineata - Balkan Green Lizard



Subsp. *trilineata*, male: GR / Santomeri, 19.04.2019; In contrast to *Lacerta viridis*, *Lacerta trilineata* may have bluish necks and flanks, but no blue heads.

Lacerta trilineata is the biggest Green Lizard. Coming across these lizards is always an impressive encounter. It occurs along the Adriatic coast, the Southern Balkans, Crete and some Greek Islands. The former subspecies *citrovittata* from the Central Cyclades has been put into species rank as well as the eastern subspecies *diplochondrodes*, *cariensis* and *dobrogica*, which are now referred to *Lacerta diplochondrodes*. Note, that the contact zone of *Lacerta trilineata* and *Lacerta diplochondrodes* in Greece and Bulgaria is poorly known.

Lacerta trilineata lives in areas with dense vegetation from sea level to the mountains up to at least 1500 meters (e.g. Crete).

Currently, four subspecies are recognized:

- Subsp. *trilineata* - Southern Balkans and several Greek Islands
- Subsp. *major* - Adriatic Coast from Istria to Western Greece
- Subsp. *hansschweizeri* - Milos, Sifnos, Serifos
- Subsp. *polylepidota* - Crete and Kythira

The validity of subspecies *major* seems to be doubtful. On the other hand, *Lacerta trilineata trilineata* on Peloponnese, shows a wide genetic variability which requires further research.

Males of *Lacerta viridis*, which may co-occur with *Lacerta trilineata*, frequently show bright blue heads in spring. In contrast to this, *Lacerta trilineata* may have bluish necks but no blue heads.

Juveniles of *Lacerta trilineata* frequently show light dorsolateral lines and a light vertebral line. In contrast to this, *Lacerta viridis* has no vertebral line. The light vertebral line also distinguishes juveniles of *Lacerta trilineata* from other small Lacertids (e.g. *Podarcis* species).



The distribution range of *Lacerta trilineata* covers the Adriatic coast, the Southern Balkans and Crete.



Subsp. *trilineata*, male: GR / Rio, 20.04.2019 - Note the massive head of this big male.



Subsp. *major*: GR / Parga, 07.06.2009 - Specimens from Western Greece and the Adriatic Coast are similar to the nominate subspecies but slightly bigger. Possibly, this subspecies is invalid.



Subsp. major, juvenile: GR / Corfu - Note the light dorsolateral and the light vertebral line.



Subsp. hansschweizeri, male: GR / Serifos, 18.04.2018 - This subspecies frequently shows pale, yellowish colours.



Subsp. *hansschweizeri*, female: GR / Serifos, 18.04.2018 - Females have smaller heads than males (see above).



Subsp. *polylepidota*: GR / Kithyra, 04.06.2011 - This subspecies looks similar to the nominate subspecies.



Subsp. *polytenidota*: GR / Crete, 11.04.2012 - A specimen basking on a fishing net.



Lake Amvrakia (GR / Etoloakarnania): Habitat of *Lacerta trilineata* and *Algyroides nigropunctatus*

* See: Kornilios P, Thanou E, Lymberakis P, Ilgaz Ç, Kumlucaş Y, Leaché A. A phylogenomic resolution for the taxonomy of Aegean green lizards. *Zool Scr.* 2019;00:1–14

