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SHORT COMMUNICATION

A new record of *Eremias montanus* Rastegar-Pouyani & Rastegar-Pouyani, 2001 (Sauria: Lacertidae) from Kurdistan Province, Western Iran

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***Abstract.*—During field work in western regions of the Iranian Plateau in the Zagros Mountains, a single specimen belonging to the genus and subgenus *Eremias* Fitzinger, 1834 was collected from the highlands of Badr and Parishan (at about 2466 m elevation) in south of the city of Qorveh, Kurdistan Province, western Iran (47°, 47' E; 35°, 04' N) in July 2010. This is the first record of occurrence of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* from Kurdistan Province.**

Key words. Lacertidae, *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus*, new record, Qorveh, Kurdistan Province, Iranian plateau, Zagros Mountains

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The lacertid lizards of the genus *Eremias* Fitzinger, 1834, encompass about 37 species of mostly sand, steppe, and desert-dwelling lizards which are distributed from northern China, Mongolia, Korea, Central and southwest Asia to southeastern Europe (Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson 1997; Anderson 1999). This genus is Central Asian in its relationships and affinities (Szczerbak 1974). About 16 species from this genus occur on the Iranian Plateau, mostly in northern, central, and eastern regions (Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson 1997; Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001; Anderson 1999).

As a member of this genus, *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* is distributed in western Iran, in Kermanshah and Hamadan Provinces (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001, 2005; Rastegar-Pouyani, N. et al. 2006, 2007; Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al. 2009).

So far, there are no further records of occurrence of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* in other regions of the Zagros Mountains, including Kurdistan Province, which is located on the western periphery of the Iranian Plateau, bordered by Iraq on the west (Fig. 1). In July 2010, we collected a single specimen of this taxon from the highlands of southern Kurdistan Province from the Badr and Parishan region, about 20 km south of Qorveh city near the Aminabad village (47°, 47' E; 35°, 04' N; 2466 m).

The collected specimen was active during the daytime, foraging on rocks and in rock crevices as well as under bushes. The habitat is an upland area, characterized by steppe vegetation, being covered with snow from late November until late March (in the snow covered years) (Fig. 2).

Measurements in millimeters (mm) and pholidotic characters, as well as color pattern of the collected specimen, are as follows:

Snout-vent length (SVL) 59.5; tail length 95.5; axilla-groin distance 26; foreleg length 22.8; hind leg length 37.4; head length 20; head width 11; head height 5.27; dorsal scales slightly converging posteriorly with 65 small granular scales across middle of dorsum; venter with 13-14 longitudinal and 27-28 transverse rows of plates; subocular reaches mouth edge; one frontonasal; two supraoculars which are not completely separated from frontal and frontoparietals; 14 scales across widest part of venter; lower surface of the fourth finger containing two rows of subdigital scales; the lateral scales of the fourth finger without carinate lamellae; 25-26 scales on the 11th annulus of the tail; 8-9 upperlabials, 4-5 of which anterior to subocular; 7-8 lower labials; two supraoculars; 6-7 supracilliaries; 20-20 femoral pores, separated by three scales; 11-12 collars; five pairs of submaxillary shields.

Coloration: the collected specimen is an adult male, dorsum dark-brown almost without spots and ocelli, interrupted by five light longitudinal stripes, the vertebral

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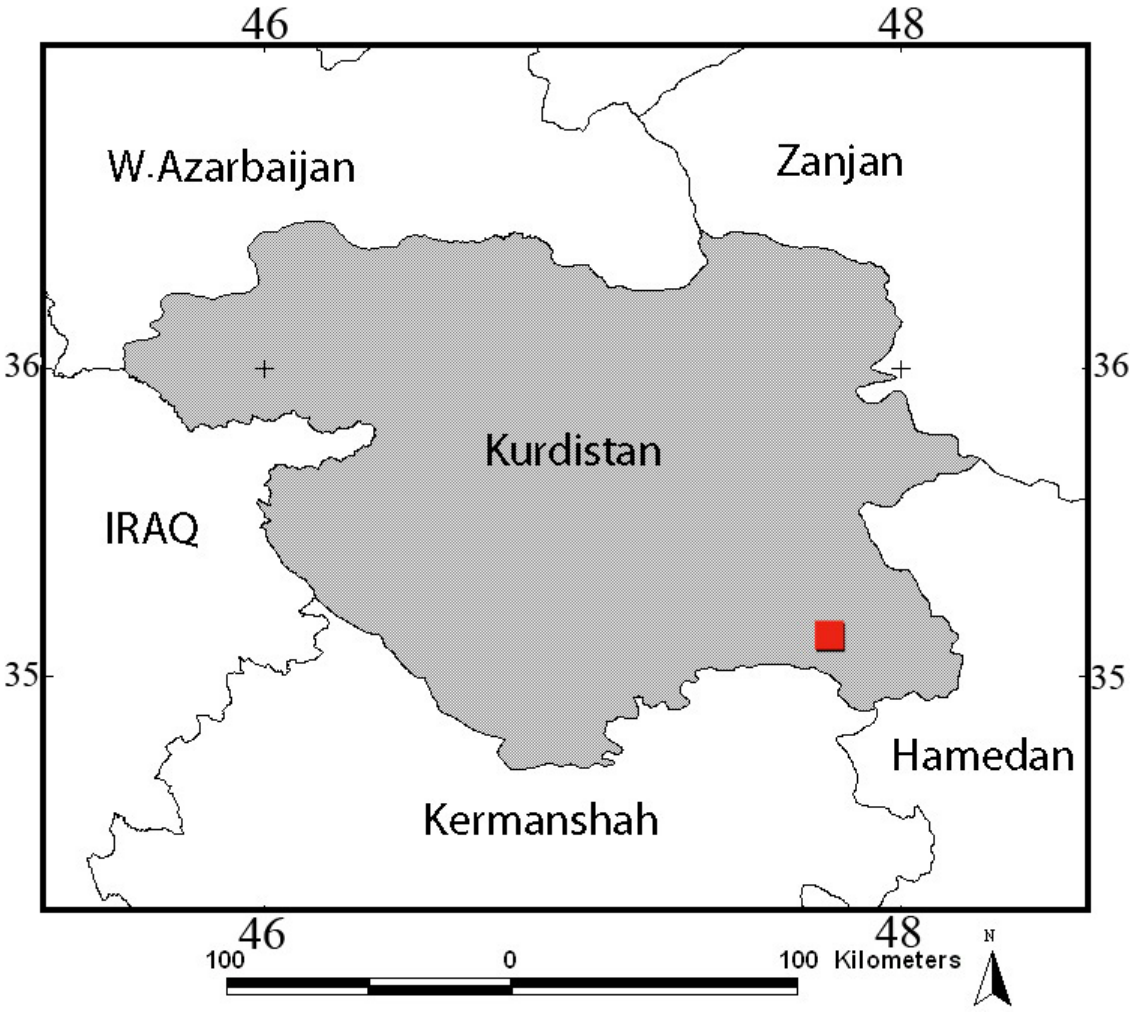

Figure 1. The red square is the location of the newly-collected specimen of *E.* (*Eremias*) *montanus* in Kurdistan province.

Figure 2. The natural habitat of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* (new record) in Badr and Parishan highlands, at about 2466 m elevation.

Figure 3. Dorsal view of the collected specimen of *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus*.

stripe bifurcating on the nape, a single paravertebral stripe on each side and two dorsolateral stripes containing light spots; venter dirty-white; the proximal lower caudal region being whitish-gray, becoming lighter distally. The collected specimen is preserved in 75% alcohol and is deposited at the collection of the Razi University Zoological Museum (RUZM-LE30.7) (Fig. 3).

Remarks: *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* was first described in 2001 from the highlands of Kermanshah Province, western Iran at an elevation of more than 2000 m (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2001). This lizard belongs to the mountainous radiation of the *Eremias persica* species complex inhabiting high elevations of the Zagros Mountains (Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al 2009). In 2005, Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani reported a new and unknown population of *Eremias* from the high elevations (about 2800 m above sea level) of the Alvand Mountains in Hamedan Province. These authors tentatively named the new population as *Eremias novo* (Rastegar-Pouyani and Rastegar-Pouyani 2005). With further morphological and molecular studies it was shown that this new population is conspecific with *Eremias* (*Eremias*) *montanus* (Rastegar-Pouyani, E. et al. 2009). Thus, the original range of the species extended into highlands of Hamedan Province, some 175 km toward the south.

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