



Fig. 231: *Mesalina ayunensis*, Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyah, Dhofar, Oman.

R. FELIX



Fig. 232: *Mesalina ayunensis* from Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyah, Dhofar, Oman predating *Tropicolotes scortecii*.

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Mesalina ayunensis ARNOLD, 1980
Dhofar Sand Lizard

Synonymy

None.

Range. Endemic to Dhofar, Oman.

Size. Up to at least 42 mm SVL. Tail approximately twice as long as body.

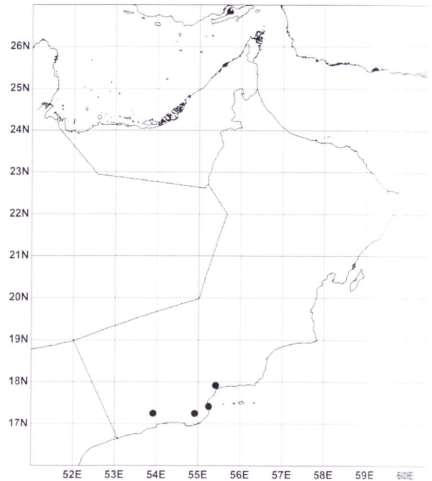
Identification. A small *Mesalina* with a distinctive blue tail, restricted to Dhofar, Oman. The upper surface of the back and head is buff to coppery-brown, though the rear back and thighs may also have a bluish tint. In adults, there are faint, dorsal, longitudinal stripes as follows: a slightly darker stripe extends from each ear opening rearwards along the flanks to the tail base, bordered above and below with lighter stripes. The vertebral region is mid-brown.

The upper surfaces of the limbs have a slight mottling of paler spots. The dorsal surface of the tail is bright electric blue, with brownish cross bars becoming narrower distally.

Scalation data here are based on only two specimens. 44–47 or more dorsal scales across mid-body; 33–35 gulars from symphysis of chin shields to collar; 16–18 femoral pores on each side; 27–28 scales under the 4th hind toe; a clear row of enlarged scales beneath lower foreleg; scales on upper surface of hind leg not obviously bigger than dorsals between hind legs.

Biology. Very little is known of the biology of this species. It appears to be relatively rare and shy, than *M. adramitanus*, with which it is largely sympatric. It has been observed to prey on Scortecci's dwarf gecko (*Tropiocolotes scorteccii*).

Habitat. Sea level to at least 1650 m. It is found in the drier, non-monsoonal areas of the Dhofar Highlands on coarse gravel slopes. At Hasik and Shuwaymiah it has been observed close to the sea, even venturing onto the beach crest.



Distribution. Known from localities between the type locality at Ayun, from Jebel Samhan, and as far east as Wadi Shuwaymiah.

Pertinent references. ARNOLD 1980a, VAN DER KOOIJ 2001.