
Timon lepidus (Figs. 4 a-e)
(DAUDIN, 1802)

Synonyms

Lacerta lepida (DAUDIN, 1802)

Lacerta ocellata (DAUDIN, 1802)

Lacerta maculata DAUDIN, 1802 (GENIEZ et al. 2014)

Lacerta margaritata (SCHINZ,1833)

Lacerta ocellata (DUMÉRIL & BIBRON, 1839)

Lacerta ocellata var. *margaritata* (BOETTGER, 1879)

Lacerta ocellata var. *iberica* (SOANE, 1885)

Lacerta lepida iberica (fide PEREZ-MELLADO in SALVADOR, 1998)

Timon lepidus ibericus (LÓPEZ-SEOANE,1885)

Lacerta ocellata iberica (LÓPEZ-SEOANE,1884)

Lacerta lepida iberica (MATEO & CASTROVIEJO, 1991)

Timon lepidus oteroi (CASTROVIEJO & MATEO, 1998)

Lacerta lepida oteroi (CASTROVIEJO & MATEO, 1998)

Timon lepidus oterorum (MICHELS & BAUER, 2004)

Timon lepidus oteroi (MAYER, 2015)

Range: Spain, S France, W Italy (restricted to W Liguria)

As for the specimens of *T. lepidus* in Italy and southern France, the growing impact of human activities in the area and the growing exploitation of agricultural lands in favour of intensive cultivation have progressively reduced the populations of this beautiful saurian. I want to remind here that *T. Lepidus*, as an autochthonous fauna, is protected by the Bern Convention - which came into force in Italy on June 1, 1982 - according to which it is strictly forbidden to keep animals picked up from the wild. Therefore, I advise anyone who wants to breed this species to check the actual birth in captivity of the specimens, always requesting the related documentation. It often happens, however, to find wild-captured (WC) specimens around fairs and herpetological markets. My advice is then to prefer newborns of a few days or weeks and consider whether the seller exhibits or sells numerous young animals of the same age. In this way, the specimens that we are going to buy are more likely to be part of a hatching in captivity. Let us also remember that our passion for terraria should not be a justification for increasing the phenomenon of poaching and taking animals out of the wild, animals who are often seriously threatened or even in danger of extinction.



Figure 4 a. *Timon lepidus*, subadult male. Picture by Alessandro Vetere.



Figure 4 b. Young *Timon lepidus*, Liguria, Italy. Picture by Matteo Di Nicola.

Features

Dimensions: adults up to 40 cm and over in length.

Features: Large occipital scale, 8 or 10 ventral scale rows. Adults show 6 (or more) blue spots on the sides of the body (Figs. 5 a-b). The background coloration is bright green interspersed with dark (brown to gray) reticles. The juvenile is characterized by the presence of white spots distributed throughout the back, with the exception of the tail and the head (Fig. 6). The adult specimens from the Spanish area have smaller blue spots than the Italian or French specimens.

Subspecies

Throughout the Iberian Peninsula the distribution of the different subspecies of *Timon* is relatively complex. Currently, three subspecies of *T. lepidus* are widely recognized: *T. lepidus ibericus* (LÓPEZ-SEOANE, 1884) in the north-western part of Portugal and Spain, *T. lepidus oteroi* (CASTROVIEJO & MATEO, 1998) from the island of Salvora and *T. lepidus* which inhabits the remainder of the distribution area.

Recent phylogeographic studies have indicated that the Iberian Peninsula has been an important glacial refugium for the survival of ocellated lizards during adverse climate



Figure 4 c. *Timon lepidus*, adult female, close up. Picture by Alessandro Vetere.



Figure 4 d. Baby *Timon lepidus* in his natural habitat, Liguria, Italy. Picture by Matteo Di Nicola.



Figure 4 e. Baby *Timon lepidus*, close up. Picture by Alessandro Vetere.

conditions in the Quaternary period (MIRALDO et al. 2011). These refuges have led to the formation of evolutionary lineages of ocellated lizards by processes of population fragmentation, contraction and expansion. On the Iberian Peninsula the distribution of the different subspecies of *Timon* is relatively complex. Currently, three subspecies of *T. lepidus* are widely recognized; *T. lepidus ibericus* (LÓPEZ-SEOANE, 1884) in the north-western part of Portugal and Spain, *T. lepidus oteroi* (CASTROVIEJO & MATEO, 1998) from the island of Salvora and *T. lepidus* which inhabits the remainder of the distribution area. A recent study, (PEEK R., 2011), supported the hypothesis of a new *T. lepidus* subspecies found in Sierra de Gredos (Castilla y Leon, Spain) with similar features, but smaller in size (around 20 cm in maximum size).



Figure 5 a. *Timon lepidus* skin, (adult male) close-up. Picture by Matteo Di Nicola.

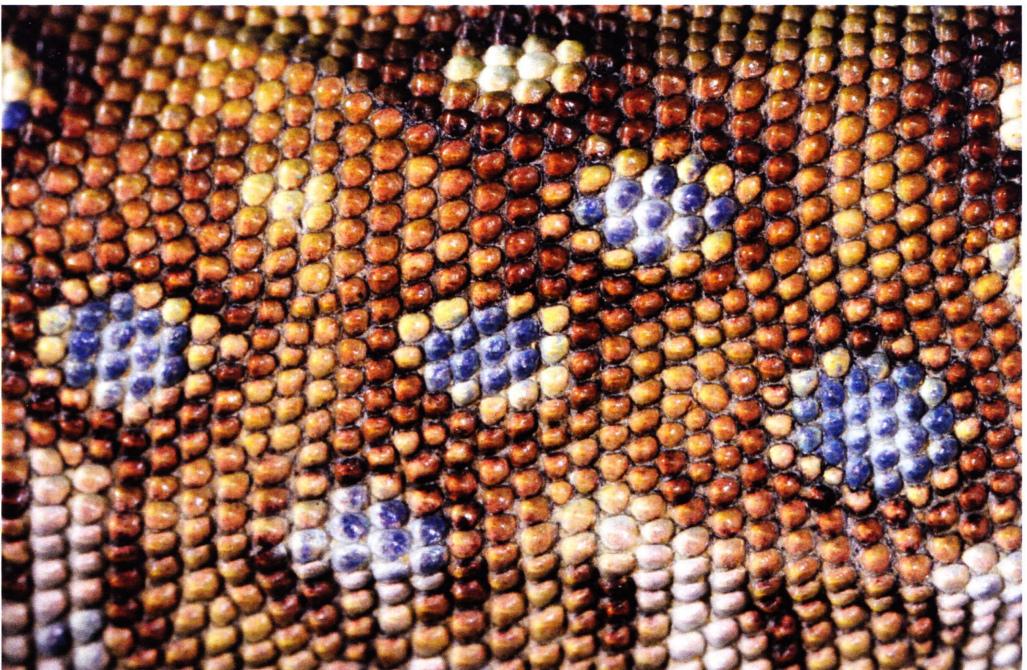


Figure 5 b. *Timon lepidus* skin, juvenile, close-up. Picture by Matteo Di Nicola.



Figure 6. Just hatched *Timon lepidus*. Picture by Alessandro Vetere.