
THE MEADOW LIZARD

Lacerta praticola Eversmann, 1834

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Meadow Lizard
from the
Ihtiman
Sredna gora

The range of this species is divided into two parts – the Balkan one, inhabited by the subspecies *L. p. pontica* (Lantz & Cyrén, 1919), and Caucasian (inhabited by *L. p. pontica* in Northwestern Caucasia and Abhasia, and *L. p. praticola* – in Northeastern Caucasia and Transcaucasia). In the Balkans, it can be found in many isolated and scattered habitats in Bulgaria, Serbia, European Turkey (in Strandzha); it also penetrates to the north of the Danube in Southwestern and Southeastern Romania, and its northernmost habitat there is near Nadrag in Banat. The Caucasian part of the area includes the regions of Stavropol and Krasnodar, Northern Ossetia, Chechnia-Ingushetia, Dagestan, Transcaucasia, in the east to Northwestern Iran.

In Bulgaria, the Meadow Lizard can be found sporadically in the regions of Vidin, Belogradchik, Trun, Cherven Brjag, Kostenets, in the Ludogorie area, the regions of Russe, Dobrudja, the Eastern Balkan Range, the front parts of the Balkan Range (the regions of Turgovishte and Preslav), in Strandzha. It inhabits mainly oak forests and prefers bright sites, meadows with thin grass and fallen leaves. In Armenia and Georgia, it can be found at altitudes of up to 2000 m, but its habitats in Bulgaria are situated at altitudes between 50 and 600 m. The Meadow Lizard is a comparatively slow-moving species (in comparison with the Common Wall Lizard, Erhard's Wall Lizard and the Balkan Wall Lizard). It feeds mainly on small insects. In the second half of June it lays 2–6 eggs sized between 11 and 7 mm. The offspring is hatched in about 55 days.

Clearing deciduous forests, especially oak forests and afforestation with coniferous trees exerts a negative influence on the populations. In Bulgaria, the Meadow Lizard is protected by Annex III of the Berne Convention.

