

## *Podarcis bocagei* (SEOANE, 1884)

Bocage's wall lizard

Lagartixa-de-Bocage

*Podarcis bocagei* is an Ibero-Atlantic endemite that is limited to the northwest of the peninsula. It occurs in western Asturia, León, in the northwest of the province of Zamora, Galicia, and on some islands near the coast, as well as in the north of Portugal.

In Portugal *Podarcis bocagei* inhabits the western and central parts of the country north of the Rio Douro extending east to about a line, eastern foothills of the Serra do Larouco - Vila Pouca de Aguiar - Serra do Marão. This border line represents the current state of knowledge and still requires more detailed investigations. Records also exist from the Serra de Montezinho and Serra de Nogueira in the northeast of the country. South of the Rio Douro its distribution is confined to the region between the mouth of the Rio Douro south to the Praia de Granja and Aguda, east to the mountains near the coast east of São João da Madeira, to the Serra de Freita and Serra de Arada.

While *Podarcis bocagei* often appears in sympatry with *Podarcis hispanica*, the currently available information suggests parapatry between *Podarcis bocagei* and *Podarcis carbonelli*, except of some dunes between Granja and Espinho.

*Podarcis bocagei* is largely confined to the precipitation-rich (> 1000 mm) Euro-Siberian, and the meso- and supra-Mediterranean zones with their Atlantic-influenced climate.

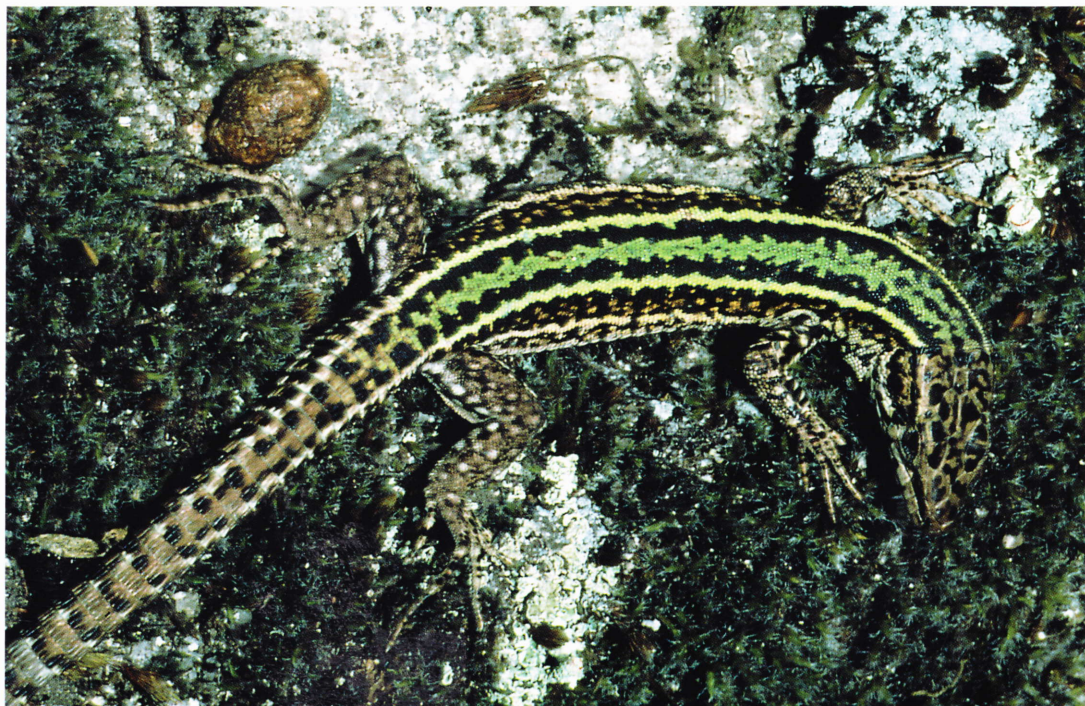
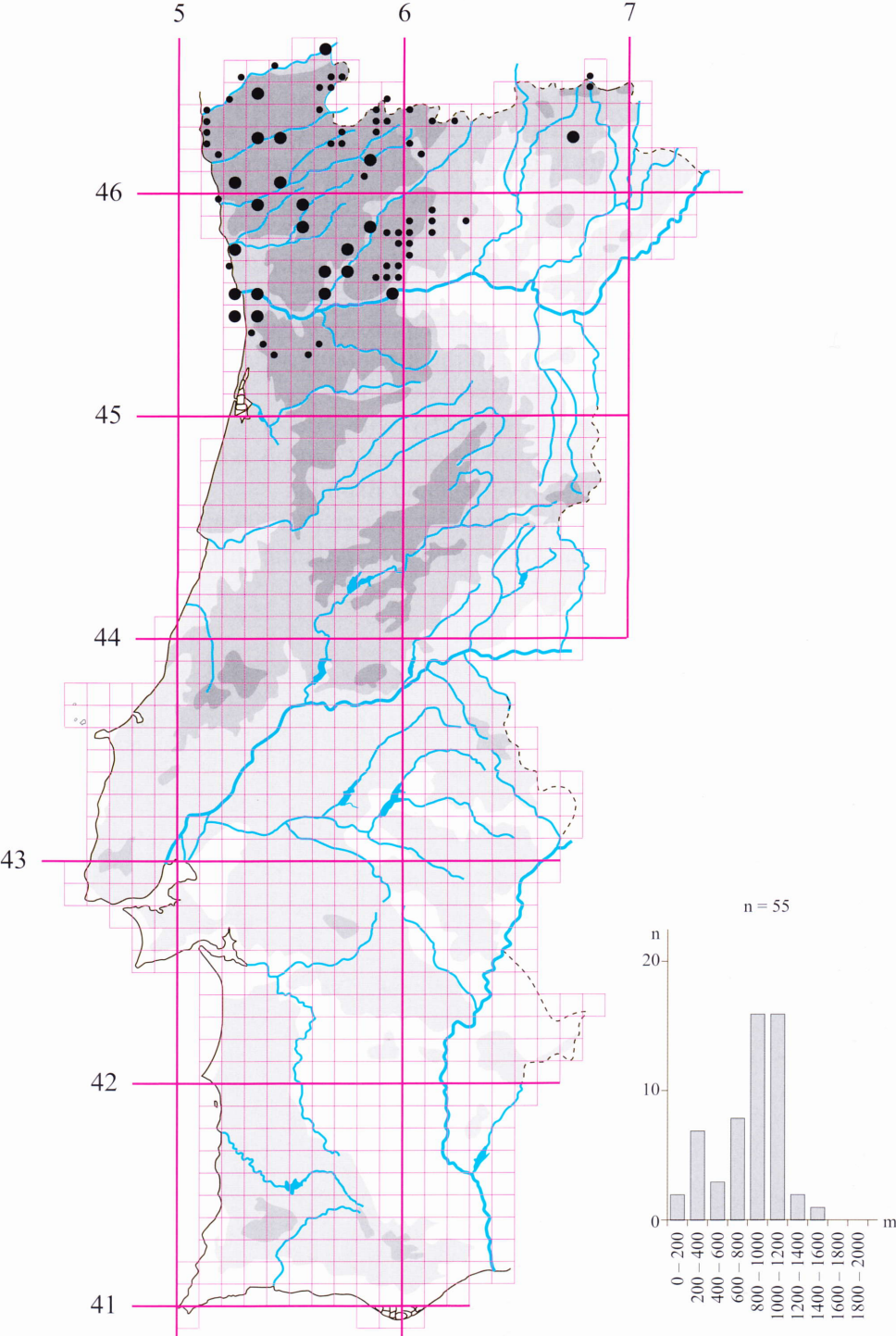


Fig. 180: Serra do Larouco. Photograph by M. SCHROTH.

*Podarcis bocagei*





It occurs from the immediate vicinity of the ocean to altitudes of 1500 m (Serra do Gerês). In the Sierra de la Cabrera Baja (Peña Trevinca, Spain) it reaches an altitude of 1850 m (GALÁN & FERNÁNDEZ 1993).

*Podarcis bocagei* is a ground-dwelling lizard that occupies a variety of habitats in coastal plains, river valleys and mountains. These include littoral dunes with partly very scattered vegetation cover, open montane *Quercus robur* and *Quercus pyrenaica* forests on rocky subsoils, rock heaths with highly variable vegetation densities (*Erica*, *Calluna*, *Genista*, *Cystisus*, *Halimium*, *Ulex*, with scattered patches of oak thickets and grass islands), and rock structures (scree fields, rock castles, lapas, walls, etc.). Being an anthropophilous species it also inhabits parcelled cultivated lands (trails flanked with hedges, dense scrub, bands of grass, stone bolts, terrace and parcel walls; niche-rich structures on abandoned hamlets and remote farm houses, stables, mills and castles), and regularly enters villages in which the traditional style of building is still present (unplastered walls of houses and demarcation walls erected from granite blocks and sheets of slate) advancing right into their centers.

Bocage's wall lizard presents itself as an adaptable species responding with flexibility to changes of habitat conditions. Its adaptability, however, reaches its limits where contemporary urbanization, modernization of existing settlements, the 'clearing' of agricultural areas and the reforestation with *Eucalyptus* and *Pinus* monocultures result in a destruc-



Fig. 181: Serra do Larouco. Photograph by M. SCHROTH.

turing of its habitats. Examples of all these factors can be found illustrated in the region between Espinho - Porto - Braga.

**References:** CARRETERO et al. (2002), FARIA (1991), FERRAND DE ALMEIDA et al. (2001), GALÁN (1994, 1996, 1997a), MALKMUS (1979b, 1981b, 1982a, 1986/87, 1995a, 2002b), SÁ-SOUSA (1998, 2001), TEIXEIRA (1997).