



Fig. 126: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, northern Negev.

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Fig. 127: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, central Negev.

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Acanthodactylus boskianus (DAUDIN, 1802)
Bosk's fringe-fingered lizard

Hebrew name: *Shnunit Nebalim* ("stream fringe-fingered lizard"), also known as *Shnunit Shfela* ("lowland fringe-fingered lizard")

Recent taxonomic changes: Coastal populations of this species are morphologically distinct, leading to their previously being considered to belong to *Acanthodactylus schreiberi*, though intermediates are known from the northwestern Negev. Genetic analysis revealed that *A. schreiberi* is restricted to Cyprus and that the lizards of the Mediterranean coastal plain are deeply embedded within *A. boskianus*, with separation thought to date to the end of the last glacial. Thus they should be viewed to represent a sand ecomorph of *A. boskianus* and are only convergent with true *A. schreiberi* (which live in sandy habitats in Cyprus).

Size: Up to 260 mm total length, SVL 28–90 mm; weight 0.5–18.5 g.

Description: A large fringe-fingered lizard. The body is brown (yellowish brown in the lowland lizard), the back is decorated with five stripes that fade with age. White lines are apparent in adults of the lowland morph. Scales on the back increase in size towards



Fig. 128: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, Judean Hills.

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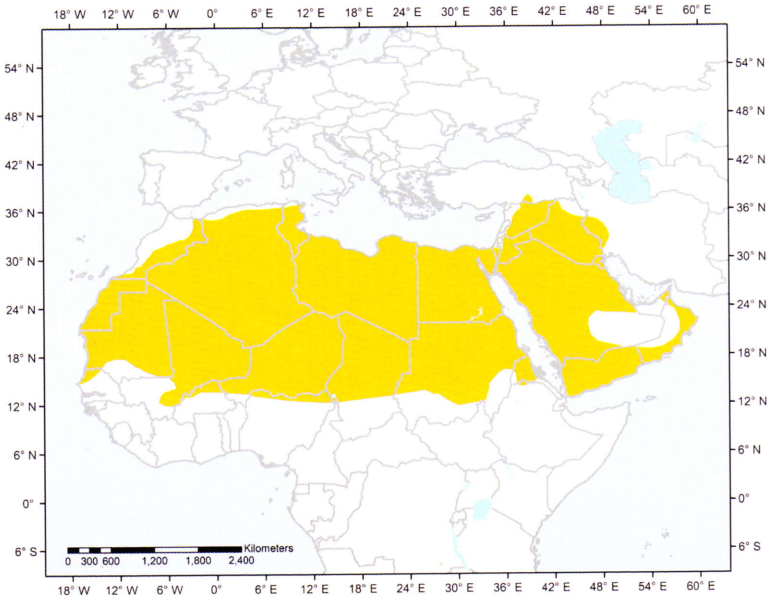
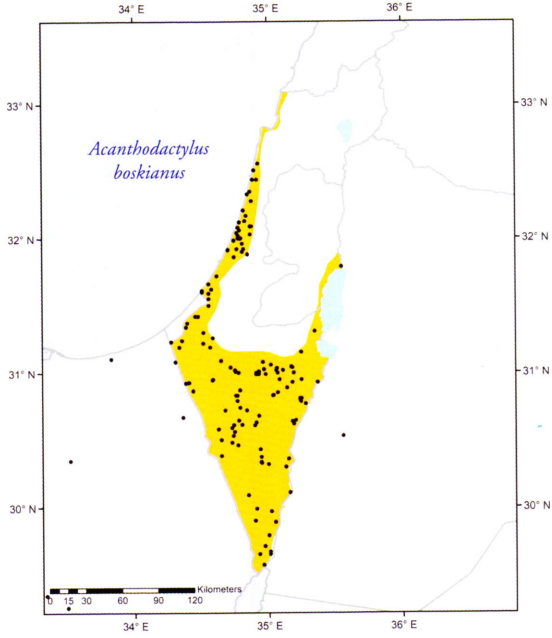




Fig. 129: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, Coastal Plains.

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the tail, which is twice as long as the body and is detachable. The underside of the tail of females and young is often orange. The male is larger than the female.

Similar species: *Acanthodactylus ophiodurus* (p. 165) is smaller, and is found only in the southern Arava sands.

Natural history and behavior: A very common lizard characteristic of riverbeds and flatlands in southern Israel and stable sands along the coastal plain. Found at high densities in patches of sand, but its distribution does not include the western Negev sands. Activity occurs on the ground and peaks in the morning and afternoon, avoiding the hotter hours. Its diet consists of arthropods and even small lizards (including juvenile *A. boskianus*). Early in the summer the female lays 1–4 clutches of 1–8 eggs (average 3–4) in a nest it digs in the ground. The young hatch around June and July.

Distribution in Israel: The Negev, Arava, coastal plain, and Dead Sea Valley.



Fig. 130: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, seeking shelter in an abandoned rodent burrow, northern Negev.

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World distribution: One of the most widely distributed lizards in the world, ranging from Mauritania, Morocco, and Western Sahara via all of North Africa to northern Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun, South Sudan, and northern Ethiopia and Eritrea in the south, but excluding the coastal zones of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, throughout the Arabian Peninsula via Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and southeastern Turkey to western Iran.

Conservation: IUCN Status: In Israel: Least Concern, but CR (A2c) as *Acanthodactylus schreiberi*; Global: Not Evaluated. This species has a huge range, mostly in sparsely populated areas, both in Israel and globally. It is thus probably relatively safe.



Fig. 131: *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, juvenile, northern Negev.

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