

A new record of *Eumeces schneideri* (Daudin, 1802) in Northeastern Anatolia, Turkey

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Abstract: In this study, the first record of *E. schneideri* was between Melekli town and Karakoyunlu, and Aralık, Iğdır. Therefore, these two new localities filled in the gap in the species' distribution range in Northeastern Anatolia, Turkey.

Key words: *Eumeces schneideri*, distribution, Northeastern Anatolia, Turkey.

The scincid lizard *Eumeces schneideri* (Daudin, 1802) is distributed from Near East, Cyprus, Transcaucasia, Central Asia East to Kirghizia, Afghanistan, and from Iraq East to Northwest India (Punjab), North Africa and South to Arabian Peninsula at an elevation ranging from 300 to 1800 m a.s.l. (Eiselt 1940, Mertens 1946, Baran 1977, Werner 1971, Darevsky 1981, Leviton et al. 1992, Disi & Böhme 1996, Anderson 1999, Sindaco et al. 2000, Göçmen et al. 2002, Kumlutaş et al. 2004, Kumlutaş et al. 2007). Until recently, it was believed that two subspecies of this species occur in Anatolia (Eiselt 1940, Başoğlu & Baran 1977, Baran & Atatür 1998, Sindaco et al. 2000). The subspecies *E. s. princeps* (Eichwald, 1839) is mainly present in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia, whereas *E. s. pavimentatus* (Geoffroy-St. Hilaire, 1827) is distributed only in the Eastern Mediterranean region (provinces of Mersin, Adana and Hatay). Recently, *E. schneideri* specimens occurring in western Anatolia have been described as new subspecies *E. s. barani* and Kumlutaş et al. (2007) provided an updated distribution map of the species in Turkey (Kumlutaş et al. 2007). Despite the non-availability of any records of the species, it was stated in some studies that *Eumeces schneideri* had previously been distributed in Eastern Anatolia (Başoğlu & Baran 1977, Baran & Atatür 1998, Sindaco et al. 2000). This is because the species is also distributed in countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Iraq and Iran (Anderson 1999). In this study, we provide the first record of the species from Northeastern Anatolia.

Our field studies in Aralık and Karakoyunlu districts (province of Iğdır, Northeastern Anatolia, Turkey) are part of a project on *Anguis fragilis* and *Pseudopus apodus*. On this occasion, we captured an adult female *Eumeces schneideri* [its snout-vent length, 133.14; total length, 307.00 mm] in Melekli town and Karakoyunlu District (Province of Iğdır, 39.9545° N, 44.1458° E, 856 m a.s.l.) on June 25, 2010. In our second field trip, we also found an adult female specimen [its snout-vent length, 158.58 mm; total length, 424.58 mm] in Kazım Karabekir Directorate of Agricultural Enterprise, Aralık (province of Iğdır, 39.7582° N, 44° 44.6532° E, 804 m a.s.l.) on August 26, 2010 (Fig. 1).

The specimens were caught in an open rocky hillside at an altitude of about 800 m (Fig. 3). The vegetation was sparse and composed of various xerophytic herbaceous plants. The specimens were found in a clear and warm weather. Air temperature was 28°C, 31°C during the field

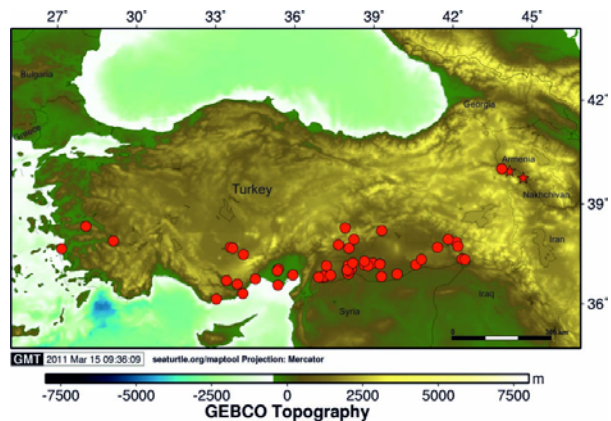


Figure 1. Distribution of *Eumeces schneideri* in Turkey. Stars show new localities.



Figure 2. General view of an adult female of *Eumeces schneideri* from Iğdır province.



Figure 3. Habitat between Melekli Village and Karakoyunlu (Province of Iğdır), where the specimen of *E. schneideri* was found.

study, respectively. The coexisting reptiles comprised the following species: *Typhlops vermicularis*, *Eremias strauchii*, *E. pleskei* and *Testudo graeca*.

The specimens from Iğdır under consideration in the present study (Fig. 2) were similar to *E. s. princeps* in terms of coloration and pholidosis (Eiselt 1940, Mertens 1946, Başoğlu & Baran 1977, Baran & Atatür 1998). However, two specimens were assessed in our study. That is why, for the present, we designate this specimens as *E. schneideri princeps*.

It was reported that the subspecies *E. s. princeps* was distributed in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia (Baran & Atatür 1998). Likewise, Sindaco et al. (2000) stated that it is distributed from SE Anatolia, W to Mersin and Konya provinces and Araxes Valley. Nevertheless, although it has been reported that the species is distributed in Eastern Anatolia, there has been no specimen that has been caught from the Northeastern Anatolia so far. On the other hand, *E. s. princeps*, one of the two subspecies of the species that lives in Iran and Armenia, is distributed in a nearby region of our present study area, and the region, from which the specimens was caught, is the possible distributional range (Anderson 1999). Thus, the newly-discovered Iğdır specimens are in any case a remarkable finding which filled in the gap in the species' distribution range in Northeastern Anatolia.

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