

THE HERPETOFAUNA OF KASTELLORIZO (MEGISTI) ISLAND (SE AEGEAN ARCHIPELAGO)

STRATIS VALAKOS and DIMITRIS PAPAPANAGIOTOU

University of Athens, Dept. of Biology, Section Ecology and Taxonomy,
GR 157-71 Panepistimiopolis 15771, Greece. Zografou Athens

SUMMARY

Nine species of reptiles and one species of amphibian are reported from the island of Kastellorizo. One of the reptiles (*Ophiomorus punctatissimus* (Bibron and Bory)) is new for the Eastern Aegean Islands. Some zoogeographical conclusions are also reported.

INTRODUCTION

The herpetofauna of the eastern Aegean islands has been little studied.

During the fall of 1981 and 1982 we visited the island of Kastellorizo which lies in the south-east part of the Aegean Archipelago, near the peninsula of Lycia. Kastellorizo is 140km. from Rhodes island and 2km. from Lycia.

The area of the island is approximately 10km². The vegetation is mainly phrygana with *Genista acanthoclada* and *Thymus capitatus*. The cultivated areas do not exceed 0.5km². The only known species of the herpetofauna of the island is the amphibian *Mertensiella luschani* (Steindachner, 1891) mentioned by Kiortsis and all, 1974.

METHODS AND LOCALITIES

We collected animals especially from 3 localities: 1. Agios Ioannis; 2. Acheres; and 3. Megisti (Fig. 1). The first locality is rocky and covered by phrygana, the second is in planted and abandoned cultivations and the third is around the only village of the island. Furthermore we walked around all the island and collected animals also from Agios Stefanos and Agia Triada.

RESULTS

Nine species of reptiles and one species of amphibian were determined from the collected specimens. From the reptiles 2 species belong to *Gekkonidae*, 2 to *Scincidae*, 1 to *Agamidae*, 1 to *Amphisbaenidae* and 3 to *Colubridae*. The Amphibian belongs to the family *Salamandridae*.

Amphibians

Mertensiella luschani (Steindachner, 1891)
52 specimens from all localities.

The species is distributed on Karpathos Island (Pieper, 1963), Kastellorizo Island (Kiortsis and all 1974) and Asia Minor where 5 subspecies are mentioned (Basoglou 1978).

Reptiles

Cyrtodactylus kotschy (Steindachner, 1870)
2 specimens from localities 1 and 2

One of the specimens found on a stone in A. Ioannis region and the other on a wall on Acheres region. It is distributed in S. Italy, Balkans, Greece, Israel and Iran (Mertens, 1960).

Hemidactylus turcicus (Linnaeus, 1758)
1 specimen from locality 3

It was found on a wall. It is distributed in all the Mediterranean area (Mertens, 1960).

Ophiomorus punctatissimus (Bibron and Bory, 1833)
1 specimen from locality 1

It was found in the soil. It is distributed in the Peloponnese, Kythera (Arnold, 1978) and Turkey in Xanthus (Anderson and Leviton 1966).

This is the first report of the species in the Eastern Aegean Islands.

Ablepharus kitaibelli (Bibron and Bory 1833)
1 specimen from locality 3

It is distributed in the islands of the Aegean Archipelago and Asia Minor (Mertens, 1960).

Agama stellio (Linnaeus, 1758)
2 specimens from localities 1, 4

They were found lying on the ruins of buildings. It is distributed in some islands of the Cyclades in the eastern islands of Aegean, in Asia Minor, West Asia and North Africa except Egypt (Mertens, 1960).

Blanus strauchi (Bedraga, 1884)
1 specimen from locality 1

It was found on the soil. It has been reported from Rhodes, Kos (Wettstein 1953), Turkey (Basoglou 1977), also from a small islands near the south west coast of Asia Minor (Baran, 1984).

Coluber ravergeri (Rauss, 1833)
2 specimens from localities 1 and 2

They were found in cultivated fields. It has been reported from Rhodes (Wettstein, 1953), Kalymnos (Schneider, 1983) and Turkey (Basoglou, 1980).

Eirenis modestus (Martin, 1838)
2 specimens from localities 1 and 2

They were found under stones. It is distributed in Asia Minor, Mytilini Island, Chios Island, Samos Island, Cyprus, Mesopotamia and N.W. Iran (Mertens, 1960).

Malpolon monspessulanus (Hermann, 1804)
1 specimen from locality 2

It is distributed in all the Mediterranean area.

DISCUSSION

The presence of the species *E. modestus*, *C. ravergeri*, *B. strauchi*, *A.* and *M. luschani* shows that Kastelorizo is a typical eastern island, like all the islands near the Asia Minor coasts. The other species have a widespread distribution in all the Mediterranean, Balkan and Asia Minor regions.

The presence of *O. punctatissimus* in Kastelorizo and also in the Peloponnese and Kythera and its absence from the islands between emphasises one of the main zoogeographical problems of the Aegean, since many other species show the same distribution, for example *Zonites algrirus* (Gastropoda, Zonitidae) mentioned by Riedel, 1979.

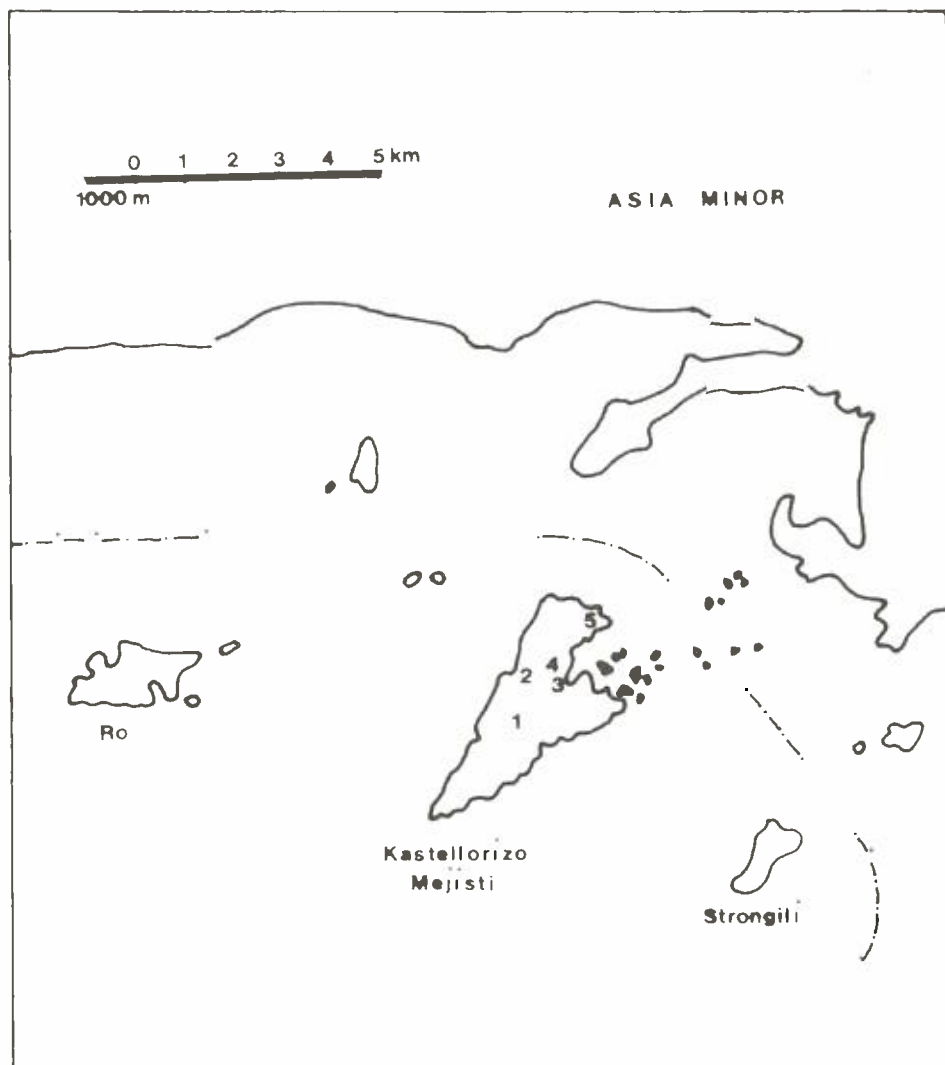


FIGURE 1. Map of Kastellorizo Island

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|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Agios Ioannis | 4. Agia Triada |
| 2. Achères | 5. Agios Stefanos |
| 3. Megisti | |

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