

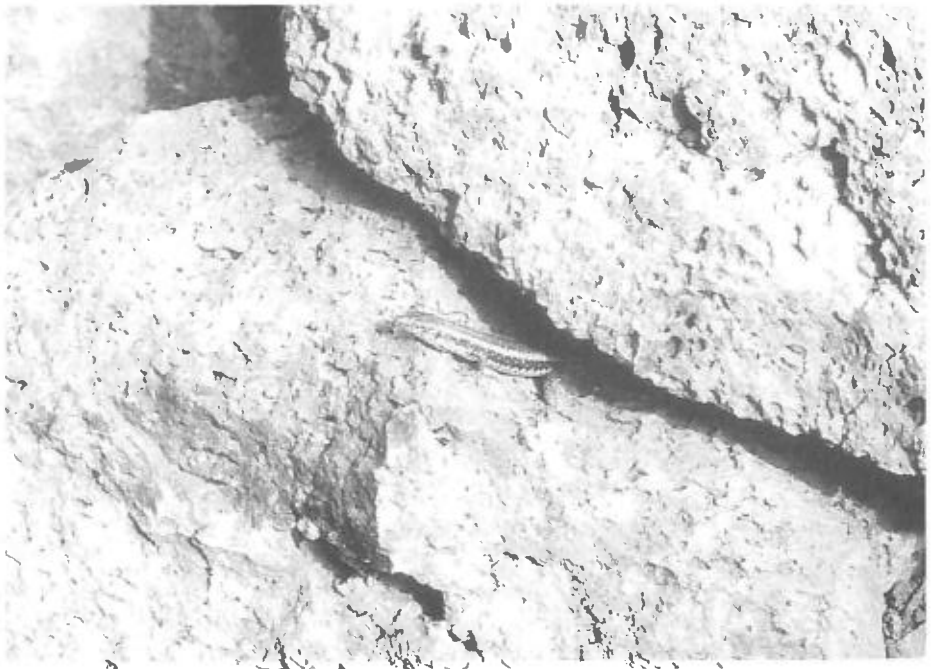
A NOTE ON *LACERTA DUGESII* IN MADEIRA

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Lacerta dugesii (Milne - Edwards 1829) occurs on four oceanic island groups in the Atlantic, of which Madeira (32°N 17°W) is the largest component. Its geographical variation has been described by Cook (1979) and its diet, based upon the examination of the gut contents of about 1700 specimens from the Madeiran Archipeligo and Savage Islands, has been analysed by Sadek (1981). This consists of a variety of invertebrates and plant material, showing differences correlated with habitat and geographical distribution. The herbivorous and scavenging tendencies of the species have recently been commented upon by Lunn (1991). Cook *et al.* (1979) have shown that the body temperature of free-ranging *L. dugesii* is always higher than the shade temperature, and lower than the temperature of the rocks on which the lizards bask. Body colour is correlated with the hues of the background in the locality in which a lizard is found, but does not affect its temperature.

During a holiday in Madeira between 13 and 22 November, 1990, I made a few observations on a colony of *L. dugesii* in the garden of Reid's Hotel. Two or three times daily, I counted the lizards on the top and exposed side of an east-facing stone wall about 25 m long, 3 m high and 0.5 m wide; and on a rockery nearby, of similar width, 15 m long and facing south. Air temperature, during the times when the lizards were active, ranged between 20 and 26°C, but the cloacal temperature of a sample of animals averaged 30.6 (± 0.48 S.E.) °C (n = 5). This supports the conclusions of Cook *et al.* (1979). Temperatures were measured with a Thandor Th 301 Digital Thermometer with a Thermocouple Type K).



Medium-sized *L. dugesii* emerging from its refuge on the wall.

The lizards disappeared from view almost immediately their environment became shaded from direct sunlight. Three size groups were apparent - small, medium and large. In all, 278 sightings were made, 76 on the top of the wall, 90 on the side and 112 in the rockery where only 13 sightings of small lizards were recorded. In contrast, 51 sightings of small lizards were made on the wall. Sightings of medium-sized lizards were 89 in the rockery and 84 on the wall; of large lizards, 10 in the rockery and 31 on the wall. Of the different size categories, 64 sightings were of small lizards, 173 of medium and 41 of large animals. These figures suggest lower survival rates of small individuals in the rockery than on the wall. The three size groups probably represent the hatchlings of 1990, 1989, and 1988 or earlier, respectively.

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