

Annotated checklist of reptiles of Fars Province, southern Iran

Gholamifard, A.^{a,b}, Rastegar-Pouyani, N.^{a,b*}, Esmaeili, H.R.^c

^a *Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Razi University, 7714967346 Kermanshah, Iran.*

^b *Iranian Plateau Herpetology Research Group (IPHRG), Faculty of Science, Razi University, 7714967346 Kermanshah, Iran.*

^c *Department of Biology, College of Sciences, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.*

The revised checklist of reptiles for Fars Province, southern Iran, comprises of 63 species in 41 genera, 17 families and two orders (Squamata and Testudines). The most diverse suborder is the Sauria with 38 species or 60.31% of the herpetofauna, followed by Serpentes (23 species, 36.5%) and the Testudines (2 species, 3.17%). The most diverse families are the Colubridae and Gekkonidae with 15 and 14 species (23.8% and 22.2%), respectively, followed by Agamidae (9 species, 14.3%), Lacertidae and Scincidae each with five species or 7.9% of the herpetofauna, and Viperidae (four species, 6.35%). Eleven families have only one species each. The Fars Province is the type locality of several endemic species, as a new species has recently been described as well as several newly recorded species.

Key words: Fars Province, reptiles, herpetofauna, type locality, Iran

INTRODUCTION

The Fars Province covers a land area of about 125,000 km² (7.6% of total area of Iran) and is located between latitudes 27°-31°N and longitudes 50°-55°E. The region is bordered to the north by Esfahan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Provinces, to the south by Hormozgan Province, to the west by Bushehr Province, and to the east by Yazd and Kerman Provinces. The elevation range in this province extends from 450 m in the southern parts to about 4050 m in the northern parts (Boll Mountain), with a mean of 1491 m. The mean annual precipitation ranges from 150 mm to 1200 mm. This region is of great significance in terms of reptilian fauna because of geographical and zoogeographical features ref.

Since, so far, no comprehensive faunistic study has been carried out on the herpetofauna of Fars Province, in this paper we prepared a revised and up-to-date checklist of reptiles in Fars Province.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This revised checklist has been prepared based on the previous works done of the reptile fauna of Fars Province (see the Selected Bibliography) and also by examination of material from various herpetological collections as well as carrying out extensive field expeditions during recent years in Fars Province.

RESULTS**Taxonomic Account****Order: Testudines Batsch, 1788****Family Geoemydidae Theobald, 1868****Genus *Mauremys* Gray, 1869***Mauremys caspica siebenrocki* Wischuf and Fritz, 1997 - Siebenrock's Caspian turtle*Mauremys caspica ventrimaculata* Wischuf and Fritz, 1996 – Spotted-bellied Caspian turtle

Comments: *Mauremys caspica* includes three subspecies (Ananjeva et al., 2006). Iran hosts all of them (Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2008) and *M. c. ventrimaculata* is endemic to the highlands of the Kor River and Maharlu Lake basins of Fars Province, southern Iran (also reported from Bushehr Province). *Mauremys caspica caspica* has already been recorded for Fars Province. According to Fritz et al., (2008), it should be considered as *M. c. siebenrocki*.

Family Testudinidae Batsch, 1788**Genus *Testudo* Linnaeus, 1758**Comment: *Testudo graeca* Linnaeus, 1758 is the type species of the genus *Testudo*.*Testudo graeca buxtoni* Boulenger, 1921 – Buxton's tortoiseComments: *Testudo perses* Perälä, 2002, is a junior synonym of *T. g. buxtoni* (see Fritz et al., 2007).*Testudo graeca zarudnyi* Nikolsky, 1896 is the other Iranian subspecies (Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2008).**Order Squamata****Suborder: Sauria Mccarthey, 1822****Family Agamidae Spix, 1825****Genus *Laudakia* Gray, 1845***Laudakia caucasia caucasia* (Eichwald, 1831) - Caucasian agama*Laudakia microlepis* (Blanford, 1874) - Small-scaled rock agama

Comment: *Stellio microlepis* Blanford, 1874 (Type locality: Khan-e-Surkh pass, north of Sirjan, between Kerman and Shiraz and Kushk Zar, north of Shiraz (Anderson, 1999), restricted to Khan-e-Surkh pass, 65 km northeast of Sirjan on the road to Kerman by Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson (2002)) and *Agama microlepis* Boulenger, 1885 are the junior synonyms.

Laudakia nupta (De Filippi, 1843) - Large-scaled rock agamaType locality: Persepolis, Fars Province, Iran. *Agama nupta* De Filippi, 1843 and *Stellio nuptus* Blanford, 1876 are junior synonyms.

Comment: Formerly included two subspecies in Iran: *L. n. nupta* (De Filippi, 1843) and *L. n. fusca* (Blanford, 1876). These two traditional subspecies have been elevated to full specific rank by Khan (2002, 2004) and Cheatsazan et al., (2008).

Genus *Phrynocephalus* Kaup, 1825*Phrynocephalus maculatus* Anderson, 1872 - Black-tailed toad agama

Type locality: Abadeh in north of Fars Province [31°10'N, 52°37'E] reported by Blanford, 1876.

Comment: *Phrynocephalus maculatus maculatus* Anderson, 1872 is the Iranian subspecies.*Phrynocephalus persicus* De Filippi, 1863 - Persian toad agama

Type locality: The road between Armenia and Tehran, Iran.

Comment: Previously it was considered as a subspecies of *P. helioscopus* (Pallas, 1771), but has been elevated to full specific rank by Mezhzherin and Golubev (1989).

Phrynocephalus scutellatus (Olivier, 1807) - Gray toad agama

Type locality: Sophia Mountain, near Esfahan, Esfahan Province, Iran.

Genus *Trapelus* Cuvier, 1816

Trapelus agilis khuzistanensis Rastegar-Pouyani, 1999 - Khuzistan ground agama

Type locality: Five km northwest of Haft-Gel on the road to Shushtar, Khuzistan Province, Iran.

Comment: *Trapelus agilis agilis* (Olivier, 1804) and *T. a. sanguinolentus* (Pallas, 1814) are the other Iranian subspecies.

Trapelus lessonae (De Filippi, 1865) - Horny-scaled agama

Type locality: Near Esfahan, Esfahan Province, Iran.

Comments: Formerly considered as *T. ruderatus ruderatus* (Olivier, 1804), and has been reidentified as *T. lessonae* by Rastegar-Pouyani (2000). The first recorded specimen of this species in Fars Province was collected by the authors from Kimargoon, Eghlid, north of Fars Province.

Trapelus ruderatus ruderatus (Olivier, 1804) - Persian agama

Type locality: Between Ganaveh Port and Borazjan (50°45'E, 29°35'N), Bushehr Province, southwest of Iran.

Comments: *Trapelus ruderatus ruderatus* was formerly named *T. p. persicus* (Blanford, 1881). Based on examination of type material, Rastegar-Pouyani (2000) reassigned *T. persicus* to *T. ruderatus*.

Family Eublepharidae Boulenger, 1883**Genus *Eublepharis* Gray, 1827**

Eublepharis angramainyu Anderson and Leviton, 1966 - Iranian fat-tailed gecko

Type locality: Between Masjed Soleyman and Batvand, Khuzestan Province, Iran.

Comment: *Eublepharis ensafi* Baloutch and Thireau, 1986 has been considered as a junior synonym of *E. angramainyu* by Grismer (1989).

Family Gekkonidae Gray, 1825**Genus *Agamura* Blanford, 1874**

Comment: *Gymnodactylus persicus* Duméril, 1856 is the type species of the genus *Agamura*.

Agamura persica (Duméril, 1856) - Persian spider gecko

Type locality: Iran.

Genus *Bunopus* Blanford, 1874

Comment: *Bunopus tuberculatus* Blanford, 1874 is the type species of the genus *Bunopus*.

Bunopus tuberculatus Blanford, 1874 - Baluch rock gecko

Type locality: Near Bampur, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, southeastern Iran.

Genus *Cyrtopodion* Fitzinger, 1843

Comment: *Stenodactylus scaber* Heyden in Rüppell, 1827 is the type species of the genus *Cyrtopodion*.

Cyrtopodion agamuroides (Nikolsky, 1900) – Nikolsky's spider gecko

Type locality: Neizar, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, Iran and Duz Abad and Pendsch-Sara, Kerman, Iran (restricted to Pendsch-Sara by Szczerbak and Golubev, 1986).

Cyrtopodion brevipes (Blanford, 1874) – Blanford's short-toed gecko

Type locality: Aptana, near Bampur, Jaz Murian Depression, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, southeastern Iran.

Cyrtopodion gastropholis (Werner, 1917) – Werner's bent-toed gecko

Type locality: Fars Province, Iran.

Comment: This species is closely allied to *C. agamuroides* (see Anderson, 1999, 156-158).

Cyrtopodion persepolense Nazarov, Ananjeva and Rajabizadeh, 2010 – Persepolis bent-toed gecko

Type locality: 60 km northeast from Shiraz, Takht-e-Jamshid (Persepolis), 29°55'N, 52°53'E, 590 m elevation, Fars Province, Iran.

Cyrtopodion scabrum (Heyden, 1827) - Keeled rock gecko

Genus *Hemidactylus* Oken, 1817

Hemidactylus flaviviridis Rüppell, 1840 - Yellow-bellied house gecko

Comment: Recently has been recorded from Fars Province by Gholamifard et al., (2010).

Hemidactylus persicus Anderson, 1872 - Persian gecko

Type locality: Iran, no exact locality given, probably near Bushehr (Blanford, 1876), Shiraz, according to Smith (1935).

Hemidactylus turcicus (Linnaeus, 1758) - Mediterranean gecko

Comments: Gholamifard and Rastegar-Pouyani (2011), recorded this species for the first time from Fars Province. Populations of this species in Iran are considered as *H. t. turcicus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2006, 2008). Although, both *H. turcicus* and *H. robustus* have been recorded from Iran, however, populations of *H. turcicus* in Iran are referred as *H. robustus* by some authors (see Bauer et al., 2006 and Sindaco and Jeremcenko, 2008).

Genus *Mediodactylus* Szczerbak and Golubev, 1977

Comment: *Bunopus aspratilis* Anderson, 1973 is the type species of the genus *Mediodactylus*.

Mediodactylus aspratilis (Anderson, 1973) - Iranian keel-scaled gecko

Type locality: 35 km east of Gach Saran [30°20' N, 50°48' E], Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Province, southwest of Iran.

Comments: Formerly considered as *Carinatogecko aspratilis* (Anderson, 1973) (see Červenka et al., 2010). *Bunopus aspratilis* Anderson, 1973, is synonym.

Genus *Tropicolotes* Peters, 1880

Comments: Sindaco and Jeremčenko (2008) follow Kluge (1991, 1993) in assigning *belenae*, *latifi* and *persicus* to the genus *Microgecko* Nikolsky, 1907. The taxonomy of this genus remains unsettled (Rastegar-Pouyani et al., 2008).

Tropicolotes belenae belenae (Nikolsky, 1907) - Khuzestan dwarf gecko

Type locality: Bid Zard, Khuzestan Province, Iran.

Comment: *Tropicolotes belenae fasciatus* (Schmidtler and Schmidtler, 1972) is other Iranian subspecies of *T. belenae*.

Tropicolotes latifi Leviton and Anderson, 1972 – Latifi's dwarf gecko

Type locality: Kerman, Kerman Province, Iran.

Tropicolotes cf. *steudneri* (Peters, 1869) – Steudner's dwarf gecko

Comment: Recently has been recorded from Fars Province by Gholamifard et al., (2010).

Family Lacertidae Bonaparte, 1831**Genus *Acanthodactylus* Fitzinger, 1834**

Acanthodactylus micropholis Blanford, 1874 - Persian fringe-toed lizard

Type locality: Magas (Zaboli), Sistan and Baluchistan Province, Iran.

Comment: This lizard has been collected for the first time by authors from Dashte Konar Protected Zone, Forg, Darab, southeastern Fars Province.

Genus *Eremias* Fitzinger, 1834

Eremias persica Blanford, 1875 - Persian racerunner

Type locality: Near Esfahan, Esfahan Province, Iran.

Comment: Recently described species, *Eremias nigrolateralis* Rastegar-Pouyani and Nilson, 1997 has been recognized as conspecific with the typical *E. persica* by E. Rastegar-Pouyani et al. (2010).

Genus *Mesalina* Gray, 1838

Mesalina watsonana (Stoliczka, 1872) - Persian long-tailed desert lizard

Genus *Ophisops* Ménétriés, 1832

Comment: *Ophisops elegans* Ménétriés, 1832 is the type species of the genus *Ophisops*.

Ophisops elegans Ménétriés, 1832 - Snake-eyed lizard

Comments: Numerous subspecies of this widely distributed taxon have been described and *O. e. persicus* Boulenger, 1918 has been considered as a subspecies from Iran by Sindaco and Jeremčenko (2008).

Genus *Timon* Tschudi, 1836

Comment: Formerly in the genus *Lacerta* Linnaeus, 1758 (see Arnold et al., 2007).

Timon princeps princeps (Blanford, 1874) - Zagrosian lizard

Type locality: Mountain Pass near Neyriz, Fars Province, Iran.

Comments: *Timon princeps kurdistanica* (Suchow, 1936) is the other Iranian subspecies. Mertens (1952) considered *T. p. kurdistanica* to be a synonym of *T. p. princeps*.

Family Phyllodactylidae Gamble, Bauer, Greenbaum, and Jackman, 2008**Genus *Asaccus* Dixon and Anderson, 1973**

Comments: *Phyllodactylus elisae* Werner, 1895 is the type species of the genus *Asaccus*. The genus *Asaccus* formerly belonged to the family Gekkonidae, but recently has been placed in the family Phyllodactylidae based on molecular evidence (Gamble et al., 2008).

Asaccus elisae (Werner, 1895) – Werner's leaf-toed gecko

Family Scincidae Opperl, 1811**Genus *Ablepharus* Fitzinger, 1823**

Comment: *Ablepharus pannonicus* Fitzinger [*in Lichtenstein in Eversmann*], 1823 is the type species of the genus *Ablepharus*.

Ablepharus bivittatus (Ménétriés, 1832) - Two-streaked snake-eyed skink

Ablepharus pannonicus Fitzinger, 1823 - Asian snake-eyed skink

Genus *Eumeces* Wiegmann, 1834

Comment: *Scincus pavimentatus* Geoffroy St. Hilaire, 1827 [= *Scincus schneiderii* Daudin, 1802] is the type species of the genus *Eumeces*.

Eumeces schneiderii princeps (Eichwald, 1839) - Red-marked skink

Genus *Ophiomorus* Duméril and Bibron, 1839

Ophiomorus persicus (Steindachner, 1867) - Persian snake skink

Type locality: Iran, restricted by Anderson and Leviton, 1966, to Fars Province, 5 km southeast of Pol-e-Abgineh, approximately 29°33 N, 51°46 E.

Genus *Trachylepis* Fitzinger, 1843

Comment: For a long time this genus was considered in the composition of the combined genus *Mabuya* Fitzinger, 1826 (see Mausfeld et al., 2002; Mausfeld and Schmidt, 2003; Bauer, 2003).

Trachylepis septemtaeniata (Reuss, 1834) - Frontal Asian Mabuya

Comments: Formerly considered as *Mabuya aurata septemtaeniata* (Reuss, 1834). Moravec et al., (2006) give it full species status. According to Moravec et al., (2006), central and northern populations of this lizard in Iran are recognized as a distinct subspecies currently known under the name *Trachylepis aurata transcaucasica* (Chernov, 1926).

Family Sphaerodactylidae Gamble, Bauer, Greenbaum, and Jackman, 2008**Genus *Pristurus* Rüppell, 1835**

Comments: Formerly in the family Gekkonidae. This genus in addition to several other genera now constitutes the family Sphaerodactylidae (see Gamble et al., 2008).

Pristurus rupestris Blanford, 1874 - Persian rock gecko

Comments: Recently has been recorded from Fars Province by Gholamifard et al., (2009). *Pristurus rupestris rupestris* Blanford, 1874 and *P. r. iranicus* Schmidt, 1952 (Type locality: Kharg Island near Bushehr, Persian Gulf, Iran), considered subspecies by some authors, are synonyms.

Family Uromastycidae Merrem, 1820**Genus *Uromastix* Merrem, 1820**

Comment: *Stellio spinipes* Daudin, 1802 [= *Uromastix aegyptius* (Forsskål, 1775)] is the type species of the genus *Uromastix*.

Uromastix aegyptia (Forsskål, 1775) - Egyptian spiny-tailed lizard

Family Varanidae Gray, 1827**Genus *Varanus* Merrem, 1820**

Varanus griseus griseus (Daudin, 1803) - Desert Monitor

Comments: No exact distribution boundary has been given for the two subspecies occurring in Iran. Probably the other subspecies, *V. g. caspius* (Eichwald, 1831) occurs in Fars Province as well.

Suborder Serpentes Linnaeus, 1758**Family Leptotyphlopidae Stejneger, 1892****Genus *Leptotyphlops* Fitzinger, 1843**

Leptotyphlops macrorhynchus (Jan, 1862) - Long-nosed worm snake

Comment: Specimens of this species have been collected for the first time by authors from around the Parishan Lake, Kazeroon, northwest of Fars Province.

Family Typhlopidae Merrem, 1820**Genus *Typhlops* Schneider in Oppel, 1811**

Typhlops vermicularis Merrem, 1820 - Vermiform blind snake

Family Boidae Gray, 1825**Genus *Eryx* Daudin, 1803**

Eryx jaculus familiaris Eichwald, 1831 - Western sand boa

Comment: This is the first record of western sand boa from Fars Province. This snake has been collected from Ghaleh Seyed village, Kazeroon, northwestern Fars Province. The species generally occurs in Asia Minor, Turkey and western Iran with three subspecies. The subspecific status of our specimen was re-confirmed by Göran Nilson (Personal communication dated 26 April 2011).

Family Colubridae Oppel, 1811

Comment: Some authors recently consider snakes of the genus *Coluber* Linnaeus, 1758 as the members of five genera and retain the generic name *Coluber* only for North American species.

Genus *Eirenis* Jan, 1863

Comment: *Coluber collaris* Ménériés, 1832 is the type species of the genus *Eirenis*.

Eirenis collaris (Ménériés, 1832) - Collared dwarf snake

Eirenis punctatolineatus punctatolineatus (Boettger, 1892) - dotted dwarf racer

Eirenis rechingeri Eiselt, 1971 – Rechinger's dwarf racer

Comment: Presence of the second specimen of this rare species has recently been documented by Gholamhosseini et al., (2009) after identifying a specimen of *E. rechingeri* labeled "Fars Province in 2000" from an unknown locality.

Genus *Hemorrhois* Boie, 1826

Comment: Members of this genus were formerly placed in the genus *Coluber* Linnaeus, 1758.

Hemorrhois nummifer (Reuss, 1834) - Leaden-colored racer

Comment: Very similar to *H. ravergeri* and sometimes synonymized with this species.

Hemorrhois ravergeri (Ménétriés, 1832) - Variegated racer

Comment: Very similar to *H. nummifer*.

Genus *Hierophis* Fitzinger in Bonaparte, 1834

Hierophis andreana (Werner, 1917) - Andrea's racer

Type locality: Fars Province, southern Iran.

Comment: *Zamenis andreana* Werner, 1917 and *Coluber* (s.l.) *andeanus* Schätti and Monsch (2004) are junior synonyms, but *Z. andeanus* recorded for Iran by Rastegar-Pouyani et al., (2008).

Genus *Natrix* Laurenti, 1768

Natrix tessellata tessellata (Laurenti, 1768) - Tessellated water snake

Genus *Platyceps* Blyth, 1860

Comments: Members of this genus were formerly placed in the genus *Coluber* Linnaeus, 1758. *Coluber najadum najadum* (Eichwald, 1831), now under the name *Platyceps najadum najadum* has already been recognized, by mistake, as *P. n. dabli* for herpetofauna of Iran by Latifi (2000), but not included in Iran herpetofauna by Rastegar-Pouyani et al., (2008). *Platyceps n. dabli* occurs in the western part of the range in Turkey and Iraq and all the Iranian populations belong to the nominal subspecies (*P. n. najadum*).

Platyceps rhodorachis rhodorachis (Jan, 1865) - Cliff racer

Type locality: Iran (*Zamensis rhodorachis* Jan (in De Filippi), 1865).

Platyceps ventromaculatus ventromaculatus (Gray, 1834) - Hardwicke's rat snake

Genus *Psammophis* Fitzinger, 1826

Psammophis lineolatus (Brandt, 1838) - Steppe ribbon snake

Psammophis schokari (Forsskål, 1775) - Afro-Asian sand snake

Genus *Pseudocyclophis* Boettger, 1888

Pseudocyclophis persicus (Anderson, 1872) - Persian false dwarf snake

Type locality: Bushehr, Bushehr Province, Iran.

Comments: The genus encompasses one species with three subspecies including: *P. p. persicus* (Anderson, 1872), *P. p. nigrofasciata* (Nikolsky, 1907) and *P. p. walteri* Boettger, 1888. Apparently, the two latter subspecies do not have a taxonomic value (Ananjeva et al., 2006).

Genus *Spalerosophis* Jan in De Filippi, 1865

Comment: *Spalerosophis microlepis* Jan, 1865 is the type species of the genus *Spalerosophis*.

Spalerosophis diadema cliffordii (Schlegel, 1837) - Diadem snake

Spalerosophis diadema schiraziana (Jan, 1865) - Shirazian diadem snake

Type locality: Shiraz, Fars Province, Iran.

Spalerosophis microlepis Jan, 1865 - Jan's diadem snake

Type locality: Laristan (Larestan) and Shiraz, Fars Province (restricted to Laristan by Schmidt, 1939).

Genus *Telescopus* Wagler, 1830

Telescopus rhinopoma (Blanford, 1874) - Indian desert cat snake

Type locality: Kerman, Kerman Province, southern Iran.

Family Elapidae Boie, 1827

Genus *Walterinnesia* Lataste, 1887

Comment: *Walterinnesia aegyptia* Lataste, 1887 is the type species of the genus *Walterinnesia*.

Walterinnesia morgani (Mocquard, 1905) - Desert black snake

Type locality: Khuzestan Province, Iran.

Comment: Until recently, this taxon was considered as *W. aegyptia*. Nilson and Rastegar-Pouyani (2007) recognize the eastern populations of *Walterinnesia* in Iran, Iraq and eastern Saudi Arabia as a distinct species under the name *W. morgani* differing from the populations occurring further west in Egypt, Israel, western Saudi Arabia, and Jordan by a significantly lower number of anterior dorsal scale rows and completely different juvenile color pattern.

Family Viperidae Laurenti, 1768

Genus *Echis* Merrem, 1820

Echis carinatus sochureki Stemmler, 1969, Saw-scaled viper

Comments: Two species of *Echis* have been recorded from Iran: *E. carinatus* Schneider, 1801 and *E. multisquamatus* Cherlin, 1981. *Echis multisquamatus* considered as conspecific with *E. carinatus sochureki* by Arnold et al., (2009), based on DNA sequence analyzing and genetic similarity (see also Lenk et al., 2001). Based on protein sequence data, Okuda et al., (2001) suggested elevating *E. c. sochureki* to species level.

Genus *Macrovipera* Reuss, 1927

Comment: Formerly in the genus *Vipera* Laurenti, 1768.

Macrovipera lebetina obtusa (Dwigubsky, 1832), Blunt-nosed viper

Comments: Six subspecies of *M. lebetina* are distinguished (Ananjeva et al., 2006). The second Iranian subspecies, *M. l. cernovi* (Chikin et Szczerbak, 1992) inhabits eastern Iran.

Genus *Pseudocerastes* Boulenger, 1896

Comment: *Cerastes persicus* Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril, 1854 is the type species of the genus *Pseudocerastes*.

Pseudocerastes fieldi Schmidt, 1930 - Field's horned viper.

Comments: This snake has recently been recorded from Fars Province by Gholamifard and Esmaili (2010). It was considered as a subspecies of *P. persicus* by Leviton et al., (1992) and others, but has been elevated to full specific level by Bostanchi et al., (2006).

Pseudocerastes persicus (Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril, 1854) - Persian horned viper.

Type locality: Iran.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of our study, Fars Province is one of the most diverse provinces of Iran from a herpetological viewpoint. The wide ranges of geographical and geological variety, coupled with the climatologically diverse environments, provide an enormous diversity in reptile fauna. Our study, as a beginning attempt, is crucial for conducting a more comprehensive research on various aspects of biology and natural history of different taxa of reptiles in Fars Province, especially those taxa that are

poorly studied. We have just started this comprehensive study and it is hoped that some new records and new taxa of reptiles will be discovered and more new data on biology and life history of the above-mentioned taxa will be provided.

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