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DISTRIBUTION AND ECOLOGY OF *LACERTA HORVATHI* MÉHELY, 1904
(REPTILIA, LACERTIDAE) IN NORTH-EASTERN ITALY

DISTRIBUZIONE ED ECOLOGIA DI LACERTA HORVATHI MÉHELY, 1904
(REPTILIA, LACERTIDAE) IN ITALIA NORD-ORIENTALE

Abstract - The Authors present a synthesis of the distribution of *Lacerta horvathi* in north-eastern Italy and the first results of a research on its ecology in the same area.

Key words: *Lacerta horvathi*, Distribution, Ecology, NE Italy.

Riassunto breve - *Gli Autori presentano una sintesi cartografica della distribuzione di Lacerta horvathi nel Nord Est italiano redatta secondo il sistema cartografico UTM con un reticolo di 10 chilometri di lato. Essi inoltre riferiscono i primi risultati di alcune ricerche sull'ecologia della specie condotte nella stessa zona.*

Parole chiave: *Lacerta horvathi*, *Distribuzione*, *Ecologia*, *Italia nord-orientale*.

1. Introduction

Lacerta horvathi MÉHELY, 1904 (hereinafter *L.h.*) is an East Alpine - North Dinaric species (sensu LA GRECA, 1963) dwelling in rocky mountain biotopes of Germany (CAPULA & LUISELLI, 1991), Austria (GRILLITSCH & TIEDEMANN, 1986; CABELA et al., 1992; TIEDEMANN, 1992), Italy (LAPINI, 1983; LAPINI & DOLCE, 1983), Slovenia and Croatia (DE LUCA, 1989). Up to now its relict range (LAPINI & DOLCE, 1983) seems to have at least three disjunctions, but this may perhaps be due to a scarcity of research (DE LUCA, 1989). In spite of its peculiar distribution there are no significant differences in morphology (DE LUCA, 1989) and karyology (DE LUCA & DULIC, 1988; CAPULA et al., 1989) among Italian, Slovenian and Croatian populations, and the species is considered monotypic⁽¹⁾.

(1) The discovery of *L.h.* in Germany has recently been questioned by SCHMIDTLER and his colleagues. They published an amazing mocking article, under "pseudonyms" (FABERL F. & FABERL H., 1991 - Zwischenbericht zur Ausbreitung des Archaeolacerta - horvathi - Komplexes in Bayern und seinen Nachbarländern. *Die Eidechse*, 4: 9 - 12), describing a new subspecies on the basis of ludicrous characters. See CAPULA & LUISELLI, 1993 for further comments.

