

**FIRST RECORD OF THE LEOPARD
GECKO *EUBLEPHARIS*
ANGRAMAINYU (REPTILIA: SAURIA:
EUBLEPHARIDAE) FROM ANATOLIA**

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The leopard gecko *Eublepharis angramainyu* Anderson & Leviton, 1966 occurs in the western foothills of the Zagros Mountains and the Mesopotamian plain in Iran, Iraq and north-eastern Syria, with a vertical distribution of 300-1000 m (Anderson & Leviton, 1966; Nader & Jawdat, 1976; Leviton *et al.*, 1992; Martens & Kock, 1991; Anderson, 1999). It is a nocturnal lizard inhabiting stony hills and ruins, and can be seen most often in the middle of the night. It feeds among stones, on crickets, scorpions, solpugids, large spiders and beetles, as well as small geckos of the same and different species. In Iran, egg-laying occurs from the end of May to the beginning of June (Szczerbak & Golubev, 1996; Anderson, 1999). *Eublepharis angramainyu* has not previously been reported from south-east Anatolia (Basoglu & Baran, 1977; Baran & Atatür 1998; Sindaco *et al.*, 2000). We present here the first record of this genus and species from Anatolia.

An adult female was collected from Kara Dagh-Arsanli, approx. 8 km south-east of Birecik, Vilayet Sanliurfa (Fig.1), Turkey, 36° 59' N, 38° 02' E, 9 June, 2001, Leg. B. Göçmen, M. Tosunoglu & D. Ayaz. The specimen is now in Ege University, ZDEU 31/2001.

The terminology used in describing the specimen conforms to Szczerbak & Golubev (1996) and Anderson (1999). The specimen (Fig. 2) is an adult female with a

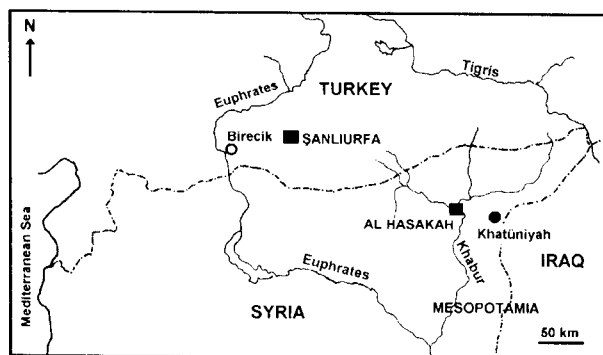


FIG. 1. Map showing the new locality (open circle) and the previously known most westerly locality (solid circle) for *Eublepharis angramainyu*.

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partly regenerated tail. Snout-vent length (SVL) 148 mm, partly regenerated tail length 66 mm, supranasal scales separated by a single, almost hexagonal internasal scale. The width of the internasal scale is more than its length, six small additional nasal scales surround the nostril; 11 supra- and 11 infralabial scales; the ear is large, with its length (5 mm) 2.5 times its width (2 mm); pentagonal mental is shorter than wide and followed by four rows of enlarged scales (postmentalia); chin shields (the first row of postmentalia) in contact with first infralabials; dorsal tubercles on the flanks almost touching each other; ventral scales hexagonal and non-imbricate, with 26 hexagonal ventral scales across midbody; 13 feebly marked (preanal) pores arranged between the anal cleft and the ventral scales in the form of an inverted "V"; 24 smooth subdigital lamellae on both hind feet; three transverse rows of ventral scales in each caudal whorl. The background colour of the body is ochreous with lilac-brown spots; on the head these spots are roughly arranged in longitudinal rows with wider interspaces, bordering the pale continuous stripe from the neck to the tail base; on both sides this strip is bordered by pale transverse bands as well as by dark interrupted stripes which can merge in a longitudinal direction; three wide, dark transverse bands on shoulder, midbody and lumbar region. Limbs covered with randomly distributed lilac-brown dots and spots; tail covered with numerous dark spots, which can be oriented transversely. Lower surfaces of the body whitish, except regenerated part of the tail, which is covered irregularly with a few small lilac-brown spots.

The specimen was found at an elevation of 400 m, on ground enriched by clay-limestone. The vegetation was sparse and composed of various grasses. It was night time, around 23.00 hr; air temperature was 25°C.

In pholidosis and coloration, the Sanliurfa specimen almost agrees with the descriptions of *Eublepharis angramainyu* given by Anderson & Leviton (1966), Leviton *et al.* (1992), Grismer (1988), Szczerbak & Golubev (1995), and Anderson (1999), except for the higher supra- and sublabial counts (11 instead of 10) and higher ventral scale count (26 instead of 24) when we take into consideration Szczerbak & Golubev's (1995) data. A similar tendency towards higher numbers of ventral and labial scales in the gecko *Asaccus elisae* from the same location (Birecik, Vilayet Sanliurfa), compared with Syrian and Iraqi specimens, was reported by Tok *et al.* (1997). Such geographic differences within a



FIG. 2. Dorsal aspect of *Eublepharis angramainyu* (ZDEU 31/2001-female) from Kara Dagh (Arsanli-Birecik, Vilayet Sanliurfa), Turkey.

species may be correlated with local conditions. Taking into account also the statement by Anderson (1999), that the ventral scale count varies between 27 and 38, we are of the opinion that our specimen indeed belongs to the species *Eublepharis angramainyu*.

A single voucher specimen of *E. angramainyu* (SMF 74240) from the Khabur river region (Khatünayah, Al Hasakah) in north-eastern Syria, near the Syria-Iraq border (Fig. 1) (Martens & Kock, 1991; Rösler, 1995: *sic* = W Syria) formerly marked the westernmost edge of the species' known range (Martens & Kock, 1991; Anderson, 1999). Thus, our record of *E. angramainyu* from the western part of SE Anatolia extends its known distribution some 290 km air distance to the north-west.

Anatolia is located at an important transitional zoogeographical region between Asia and Europe. In its eastern parts, there are no natural boundaries with the neighbouring countries and, therefore, little endemism. Syroeremic herpetofaunal elements such as *Cyrtopodion scaber*, *Stenodactylus grandiceps*, *Asaccus elisae*, *Acanthodactylus boskianus*, *Coluber ventromaculatus*, *Eirenis coronella* and *Spalerosophis diadema* (Baran & Atatür, 1998; Franzen, 1999) are known from sites close to the Syrian border. All of these species are adapted to the semi-arid conditions of the northern reaches of the Mesopotamian plain of the Turkish-Syrian border region. However, *E. angramainyu* seems to be an Iranoeremic herpetofaunal element from its known distribution (Disi & Böhme, 1996; Anderson, 1999). A penetration of Iranoeremic forms into western SE Anatolia and Syria, as exemplified by *E. angramainyu*, shows the zoogeographical importance of SE Anatolia and Syria, connecting Afrotropical and Palaearctic elements of the herpetofauna in the eastern Mediterranean region (Disi & Böhme, 1996).

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