



## A new polytypic species of the genus *Uromastyx* MERREM 1820 (Reptilia: Squamata: Agamidae: Leiolepidinae) from southwestern Arabia

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### Abstract

We describe *Uromastyx yemenensis* sp. nov. from south-western Arabia, comprising two geographic subspecies, *U. y. yemenensis* and *U. y. shobraki* ssp. nov. The new species is a member of the *Uromastyx ocellata* species group, closely related to *U. benti*. It is differentiated from its sister taxon by smaller scales around midbody and smaller ventrals. The new species is restricted to the extreme south-western tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The western populations of *U. yemenensis* differ genetically and are constantly distinct in respect to their colour pattern and are therefore recognized as a subspecies.

**Key words:** Reptilia: Sauria: Agamidae: Leiolepidinae: *Uromastyx yemenensis* sp. nov.; *Uromastyx yemenensis shobraki* ssp. nov.; *Uromastyx ocellata* species group; *Uromastyx benti*; *Uromastyx macfadyeni*, Yemen, Arabia

### Introduction

Spiny-tailed lizards of the genus *Uromastyx* are inhabitants of the desert belt of the Old World, between 5° and 35° N. Their range covers a vast land mass, including northern Africa, Israel, Jordan, Arabia (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen), Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and north-western India.

According to the most recent taxonomic reviews of the entire genus *Uromastyx* 16 valid species are currently accepted (Moody 1987; Wilms 2001, 2005): *Uromastyx acanthinura* Bell 1825, *U. aegyptia* (Forskål 1775), *U. asmussi* (Strauch 1863), *U. alfredschmidti* Wilms & Böhme 2000a, *U. benti* (Anderson 1894), *U. dispar* von Heyden 1827, *U. geyri* L. Müller 1922, *U. hardwickii* Gray 1827, *U. loricata* (Blanford 1874), *U. leptieni* Wilms & Böhme 2000b, *U. macfadyeni* Parker 1932, *U. occidentalis* Mateo, Geniez, López-Jurado & Bons 1998, *U. ocellata* Lichtenstein 1823, *U. ornata* von Heyden 1827, *U. princeps* O'Shaughnessy 1880 and *U. thomasi* Parker 1930. Of these, the following are known to occur in Arabia: *Uromastyx aegyptia*, *U. leptieni*, *U. benti*, *U. ornata* and *U. thomasi* (Wilms & Böhme, in press).

The morphology based taxonomy and phylogeny presented by Wilms (2001, 2005) has been shown to be generally in good accordance to the molecular data presented by Amer & Kumazawa (2005).

In the present paper we describe a new polytypic species, comprising two geographic subspecies, from the Republic of Yemen affiliated to the *Uromastyx ocellata* species group. This species group consists of three species (*U. benti*, *U. ocellata* and *U. ornata*) inhabiting the African and Arabian littoral of the Red Sea as well as the coastal areas of the Gulf of Aden in Yemen and southern Oman. One species, *Uromastyx macfadyeni*