

***Ptyodactylus oudrii* Lataste, 1880 (Squamata: Phyllodactylidae) : First records in the North of the High Atlas mountain (Morocco)**

Ptyodactylus oudrii Lataste, 1880 (Squamata : Phyllodactylidae) :
Premières observations au Nord du Haut Atlas (Maroc)

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Abstract. The Oudri's Fan-footed Gecko (*Ptyodactylus oudrii* Lataste, 1880) is located in two new localities in the North of its known distribution area in Morocco, on the eastern foothills of the Middle Atlas.

Keywords : *Ptyodactylus oudrii*, Morocco, Middle Atlas.

Résumé. Le Ptyodactyle d'Oudri (*Ptyodactylus oudrii* Lataste, 1880) est cité dans deux nouvelles localités au nord de son aire de répartition connue au Maroc, sur les contreforts orientaux du Moyen Atlas.

Mots-clés : *Ptyodactylus oudrii*, Maroc, Moyen Atlas.

INTRODUCTION

The Oudri's Fan-footed Gecko (*Ptyodactylus oudrii* Lataste, 1880) is located in three countries of the Maghreb (Bons & Geniez 1996, Geniez *et al.* 2004), but Trape *et al.* (2012) mention Tunisia with doubt.

In Algeria, this gecko's territory goes until the 35° north latitude. Lataste (1880) collected it at Ghardaia, Laghouat, and from Bou-Saada to Biskra. The locality of "Oran" is mentioned (Loveridge 1947) and is shown in a map (Sindaco & Jeremcenko 2008 in Perera & Harris 2010), but it could refer in fact to an old administrative division, encompassing a large territory to the South.

In Morocco, its distribution area stretches from the Anti-Atlas to the South slopes of the Eastern High Atlas and near Figuig (Bons & Geniez 1996). It was not known beyond North 32.5°, in the vicinity of Imilchil (Bons & Geniez 1996) and toward Talsint (Perera & Harris 2010). Harris *et al.* (2010) didn't find it on the northern slopes of the jbel Ayachi (Eastern High Atlas), at Jaffar cirque. So, this species seems to stop at the southern relief of the High Atlas, crossing the mountain chain on the north when this one is below 2000 m. Nevertheless, our observations show that this gecko is also on the oriental pleated foothills of the Middle Atlas.

NEW OBSERVATIONS

One specimen of Oudri's fan-footed gecko has been found by one of us (AF) on the 6th of July 2014, on the jbel Ouchilas (Province of Boulemane), at the altitude of 1597 m and at the following coordinates : 33.08242° North, 04.33520° West (Fig. 1). This locality is at 160 km to the North-East of the station on the Tizi n'Tirherhouzine pass (Bons & Geniez, 1996) and at 100 km to the North-West of Talsint (Perera & Harris 2010), the northern known stations.

The gecko has been observed and photographed (Fig. 2) during an entomological exploration, in a North-West oriented gully, edged by a wall made of blocks and crevices. The vegetation in this area was mainly constituted by Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* L.) and Alfa (*Macrochloa tenacissima* (L.) Kunth).

In this station, only one specimen has been observed even if it is known that this lizard in dense colonies and even chooses communal sites to lay their eggs (Mateo & Cuadrado 2012).

Moreover, one year after, we observed another specimen in the Ahouli Mine on the 1st of July 2015, at 1130 m and at the following coordinates: 32.82442°N, 04.56968°W (Fig. 1). This locality is midway between the known distribution area and the new station of Jbel Ouchilas.

The last known localities of Oudri's Fan-footed Gecko suggest that the distribution area of the gecko is stretching toward the North, taking advantage of the reliefs linking the Eastern High Atlas and the Eastern Middle Atlas, between, Midelt and Douirat (Fig. 1). This area, under the influence of a double Foehn effect from both the Middle and High Atlas (Rhanem 2010), receives especially dry weather, vital condition for this species. In the same way, the Jbel Meschkakour (Anoual) might show the same favorable conditions for the species and might deserve to be prospected to find this gecko.

In a recent phylogenetic study of the *Ptyodactylus* genus, Metallinou *et al.* (2015) showed that Oudri's Fan-footed gecko might be a complex of several taxa. The species encompasses four lineages: one in the Anti-Atlas, two in the High Atlas and one in the Saharan Atlas. As our new observations come from another mountain range (Middle Atlas), it would be interesting to know to which lineage they are related.

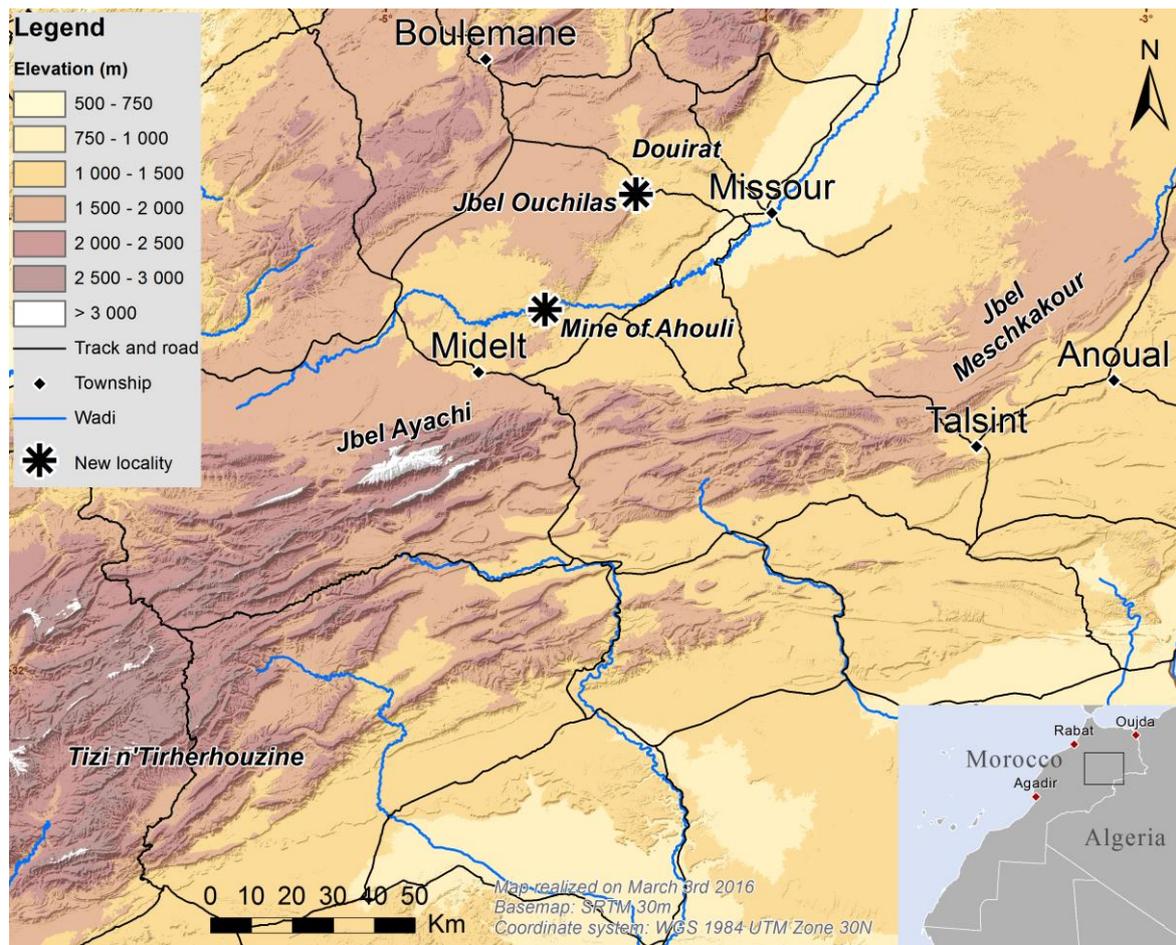


Figure 1. Map of the new localities of *Ptyodactylus oudrii* in the eastern foothills of the Middle Atlas.



Figure 2. *Ptyodactylus oudrii* observed on the jbel Ouchilas (Province of Boulemane)
Photo: A. François – 06th of July 2014.

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