The genus *Tarentola* Gray, 1825 belongs to the family Phyllodactylidae, where it has been recently placed (Gamble et al., 2008). *Tarentola mauritanica* (Linnaeus, 1758), commonly named as “Moorish Wall Gecko”, is a Mediterranean gecko species with a widespread distribution, found from Israel and the northern part of Africa (Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt), to the southern part of Europe (Portugal, Iberian Peninsula, France, Italy and Croatia), extending through many large Mediterranean islands like the Balearic Islands, Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Malta, Gozo and Crete (Radovanovic, 1941; Bons and Geniez, 1996; Martinez-Rica et al., 1997; Arnold and Ovenden, 2002; Harris et al., 2004; Rato et al., 2010; 2012; 2015; Speybroeck et al., 2016; Fig. 1). In Greece it has been recorded on the Ionian Islands [Cephalonia, Ithaca (Ithaki), Strophades, Zakynthos, Stamfani islet, Arpia islet, and recently on Corfu (Kerkyra)], on Crete (including the islet Dia), and in the western part of the Peloponnese Peninsula (Chondropoulos, 1986; Valakos and Mylonas, 1992; Harris et al., 2004; Wilson, 2006; Valakos et al., 2008; Macat et al., 2014). All European populations share a single mitochondrial haplotype (Harris et al., 2004) that is possibly originated in Morocco (Rato et al., 2010).

*Tarentola mauritanica* is often associated with human habitation and this probably gives us strong clues as to the anthropogenic introduction of the species into new localities (Arnold & Ovenden, 2002), such as the Macaronesian Archipelagos (islands Tenerife and Madeira), the Balearic Islands, South America (Argentina and Uruguay) and the USA (Baez and Biscoito, 1993; Arnold and Ovenden, 2002; Kraus, 2008; Barreiros et al., 2010; Rato et al., 2010; Macat et al., 2014; Rato et al., 2015). Herein, we present a new record of *T. mauritanica*, from Lesvos island (Northern Aegean), Greece.

Lesvos (L Lesbos) is the third largest Greek island and it is located in the Northeastern Aegean Sea (Fig. 1). It has an area of 1,636 km² and it lies 9 km from the north, and about 13 km from the east of the Turkish western coast (Gulf of Edremit). The island’s human population is 85,330 according to 2011 census (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011). Lesvos consists of a separate regional unit of the Northern Aegean region and its capital is Mytilene (Mytilini), located on the east of the island, facing the Turkish coast. The island constitutes a popular tourist destination attracting a significant number...
of birdwatchers and all kind of naturalists, amongst conventional tourists. Hitherto, there have been several herpetofaunal surveys on Lesvos (Broggi, 1978; Tsunis and Dimitropoulos, 1994; Buttle, 1995; Kasapidis et al., 1996; Cattaneo, 2003; Hofstra, 2003; 2008) that highlight the richness of the island’s herpetofauna, but with no reference to the Moorish Wall Gecko.

The first observation of the Moorish Wall Gecko on Lesvos was made in Mithymna (Molyvos) on 18 September 2011, at midday (Lat. 39.3648°, Lon. 26.1778°), by Frank Wood, a wildlife photographer from Tottington, UK (pers. comm., 2013). His observation concerns a single individual found under a litter bin next to a taxi rank (Fig. 2A). Frank Wood contacted the second author (IS) requesting species identification. Since then no other individuals have been observed in the area by F. Wood, despite several search attempts. The next observation of the species on the island was made near the port of Mytilene (Lat. 39.1063°, Lon 26.5605°) by the first author (VM) and his colleague Vladikas Kleovoulos-Dimitrios, on 29 June 2014, where two adult specimens were observed (Fig. 2B). Subsequently, the species was observed again by VM on 20 June 2015, (two adult specimens) and on 15 June 2016 [four adult specimens and one juvenile; 1 specimen (Fig. 2C) and 2 tissue vouchers in Natural History Museum of Crete: NHMC 80.3.86.137, NHMC 80.3.86.138, NHMC 80.3.86.139] in the exact same location. All individuals observed by VM were seen in the late afternoon moving on walls in a house garden near the island’s main port.

Our observations complement the current known range of the Moorish Wall Gecko. This is the first record

Figure 2. A) Moorish Wall Gecko (Tarentola mauritanica) found in Mithymna town of Lesvos, Greece, 2011. This record constitutes the first observation of the species on the island of Lesvos. B) An adult Moorish Wall Gecko on a house wall near Lesvos port, Greece, 2014. C) A Moorish Wall Gecko (adult specimen) captured near Lesvos port, Greece, 2016 (voucher# NHMC80.3.86.137, Natural History Museum of Crete). Photo A by Frank Wood; photos B and C by Vangelis Mizerakis.
of an established population of the Moorish Wall Gecko on an Aegean island, as all of the species’ observations in Greece are from the Ionian Islands, Western Peloponnesse and Crete (Chondropoulos, 1986; Valakos and Mylonas, 1992; Harris et al., 2004; Wilson, 2006; Valakos et al., 2008; Macat et al., 2014; Fig. 1A). Given that introduced species can affect negatively the native fauna and flora, we deem that monitoring the Moorish Wall Gecko’s population on Lesvos is important, in order to record and prevent possible negative impacts and faunal interactions the species’ occurrence could cause on the island.

Acknowledgements. We would like to give special thanks to Frank Wood for providing us his data and observations and granting us his permission to use them in this document. We also give many thanks to Vladikas Kleovoulos-Dimitrios for his contribution to the surveys which lead to the records made back in 2014, and to Stephanos A. Roussos for a pre-peer review of the document.

References

Accepted by Daniel Portik