

Distribution of the tiger beetle *Lophyridia caucasica* (Adams, 1817) in Iran (Coleoptera: Cicindelidae)

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Abstract. The occurrence of the tiger beetle *Lophyridia caucasica* in western Iran is confirmed from the re-examination of old museum specimens and from newly collected material. Morphological characters, i.e. the male genital morphology, clearly demonstrates its presence in Iran together with the similar *L. sturmi*. *L. caucasica* appears to have a scattered distribution in Azerbaijan-e Gharbi, Azarbayjan-e Sharqi, Gilan, Zanjān, and Khuzestan provinces.

Kurzfassung. Anhand von älterem Museumsmaterial und neu gesammelten Stücken wird das Vorkommen des Sandlaufkäfers *Lophyridia caucasica* im Iran bestätigt. Nach morphologischen Merkmalen, besonders der Genitalmorphologie der Männchen, ist das Vorkommen der Art im Iran neben *L. sturmi* eindeutig. *L. caucasica* scheint eine verstreute Verbreitung im westlichen Teil des Landes aufzuweisen. Fundorte sind aus den Provinzen Azerbaijan-e Gharbi, Azarbayjan-e Sharqi, Gilan, Zanjān und Khuzestan bekannt.

Key words. Coleoptera, Cicindelidae, *Lophyridia caucasica*, Iran, distribution.

Introduction

The tiger beetle *Lophyridia caucasica* (Fig. 1) is commonly cited in checklists and catalogue works as occurring in Iran (e.g. HORN 1926, ALI 1978, WIESNER 1992). However, in his survey of the Iranian tiger beetles, NAVIAUX (1983) mentioned no locality records from this country. Moreover, CASSOLA (1999) recently questioned its occurrence in Iran and suggested that all older records of this species refer to the closely related *L. sturmi* (Ménétriés, 1832).

Both species, *L. caucasica* and *L. sturmi*, are apparently closely related and rather similar in general appearance. But in addition to its smaller size, *L. caucasica* is easily distinguished from *L. sturmi* by the shape of its aedeagus: in *L. caucasica* it is strongly curved with a hooked outside and a knobbed inside tip. The aedeagus of *L. sturmi* is more elongate, distinctly less curved, with a pin-shaped, pointed tip (Fig. 2). In addition to this morphological character, there are also differences in habitat choice. Both species inhabit sandy beaches. But unlike to *L. sturmi*, which seems to occur commonly in coastal saline habitats (mostly beaches in Iran, cf. RIVALIER 1967, NAVIAUX 1983), *L. caucasica* is completely restricted to riparian habitats, i.e. sandy river beaches (data from Turkey, FRANZEN unpublished).

We report here records of *L. caucasica* from Iran. Abbreviations used are: CHS = Coll. HEINZ, Schwanfeld; CFO = Coll. FRANZEN, Oberneuching; CGR = Coll. GEBERT, Schleife-Rohne; CHJ = coll. HAJDAJ, Jezov; ZSM = Zoologische Staatssammlung, München.