

# First record of the Five-toed Jerboa, *Allactaga euphratica*, Thomas, 1881 in Lebanon

by Mounir R. Abi-Said

**Abstract.** A total of 11 specimens of *Allactaga euphratica* was captured at two localities in the Northern Beka'a in 2001 and in North Lebanon in 2004. The specimens are larger than those described from other parts of the Middle East. The Lebanese population is separated from the nearest Syrian population by the Anti-Lebanon mountains.

**Kurzfassung.** An zwei Stellen der nördlichen Beka'a wurden 2001 und im nördlichen Libanon 2004 insgesamt 11 Exemplare von *Allactaga euphratica* gefangen. Die Exemplare sind größer als jene, die aus anderen Teilen des Nahen Ostens beschrieben wurden. Die libanesische Population ist von der nächstgelegenen Population in Syrien durch den Anti-Lebanon getrennt.

**Key words.** Morphology, zoogeography, Rodentia, Middle East.

The Five-toed Jerboa, *Allactaga euphratica* Thomas, 1881, has a distribution range that extends from the steppe desert of the Arabian Peninsula to Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan (HARRISON & BATES 1991). Its presence has been reported in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria (HATT 1959, NADACHOWASKI et al. 1990, LEWIS et al. 1965, ATALLAH 1978, MISONNE 1957, ATALLAH & HARRISON 1968, KOCK & NADER 1983). The presence of this species in Lebanon, however, has not been reported (TOHME & TOHME 1985, HARRISON & BATES 1991).

Oral accounts from local shepherds herding in the highlands of Northern Beka'a led me to conduct night field surveys there to verify the reported presence of *jarbou'* or *jerdoun abou sharrabeh*, as the Jerboa is called in Arabic. On 15 July 2001 seven specimens (3 ♀ and 4 ♂) were captured at Jurd Nahleh (34°03'N, 36°22'E, 2327 m asl). On 30 August 2004 four specimens (1 ♀ and 3 ♂) of this species were also found and captured at Khashaa Alfara (34°18'N, 36°04'E, 2660 m asl), North Lebanon. Morphometric measurements were taken for all individuals, which were subsequently released (Tab. 1). Both localities consist of exposed rocky dry land, with vegetation dominated by *Onobrychis cornuta* (Fig. 1.).

**Description.** The body is covered with soft fluffy fur that is dark sandy in colour on the dorsal surface, lightens on the sides, and changes to beige on the abdomen. The ears are long and narrow (~53.86 mm). The tip of the tufted tail, which is almost twice the length of the body (~209.95 mm), consists of a long fluffy black fur that typically ends with a white furry tip. The hind feet are greatly elongated (~67.97 mm) with five digits and naked soles. The morphometric data taken from the eleven jerboas are summarized in Tab. 1.