

**Community of Reptiles in the Sandy Habitats of the Ferghana Valley (Uzbekistan)  
and the Endemic Species Conservation Problem**

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In 2018–2019, isolated sandy habitats in the Ferghana oasis were surveyed. The reptile communities in the sands had a similar structure and very high population density, reaching up to 144 ind./ha. In all habitats, two racerunner species absolutely predominated, namely, *Eremias velox* and *Eremias scripta*, which accounted from 56.9 to 94.5% of the total abundance. In some habitats the dominants included Rustamov's plate-tailed gecko and Strauch's toad-headed agama. Three endemic lizard species (*Phrynocephalus strauchi*, *Eremias scripta pherganensis*, and *Teratoscincus scincus rustamowi*) had high population density and were classified as common or numerous. They accounted for an average of 52% (34–74%) of the total reptile abundance. The relationship among reptiles and their distribution in their biotopes were described. The current status of the habitats was assessed and few factors affecting the number of reptiles were considered. Due to plowing and watering, the area of sand habitats has decreased by 3.7 times since 1960 (down to about 180 km<sup>2</sup>). The only protected area (the Yazyavan natural monument) is not enough to maintain the biodiversity of these isolated desert habitats. It is necessary to enlarge the protected area by including several large massifs in several parts of the Fergana Valley. The total area of refuges in this case will be about 95 km<sup>2</sup>.

**Keywords:** reptile population of sandy habitats, endemic species protection, the Ferghana Valley.

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