Fig. 355: An Amur Grass Lizard, *Takydromus amurensis*, perching on a fern. E. Dunayev

Genus *Takydromus* Daudin, 1802
Asian grass lizards

Small, slender lizards with a body length of up to 7.5 cm in adults, and an extremely long tail that in some species may exceed 4–5 times the snout–vent length. Females usually attain larger sizes than males.

The frontal scale is wide, the occipital is well developed. The nostril is located between 2–3 nasal and postnasal scales and the first supralabial. The eyelids are separate, movable, and covered with scales. The collar is poorly developed. The dorsal scales are large and strongly keeled, but those on the flanks are small and granular; all or only the outer large ventral scales are keeled. The row of femoral pores is reduced to 0–5 inguinal pores. The lamellae on the underside of the fingers are smooth or tuberculated.

Adult Asian grass lizards have 9–10 teeth on the premaxillary bone, and there are few or no teeth on the pterygoid bones. Osteoderms completely cover the supraorbital region.

The colour of the upper side of the body is often more or less uniform; sometimes adult specimens have pale dorsolateral stripes, at least on the fore part of the body, but these are not present in juveniles. The main background colour is usually brown or green, and blue ocelli on the flanks are found only in *Takydromus sexlineatus ocellatus*. The belly is not bright, usually whitish or greenish, monochromatic or with dark spots. There are no blue spots on the outer edges of ventral scales; the tail of hatchlings is not vividly coloured.

Asian grass lizards live in grassy habitats; they climb perfectly on the stems of plants. The females lay eggs in small clutches of 1–4 to 4–9 eggs, depending on species. In some species, the incubation period is very short.

Asian grass lizards inhabit South-east and East Asia, to Myanmar in the west and to Japan and the Primorsky Region of Russia in the north and north-east, respectively.

The genus contains 24 species, of which two are found in Russia.

Amur Grass Lizard
Takydromus amurensis Peters, 1881
Figs. 355–359, Map 73

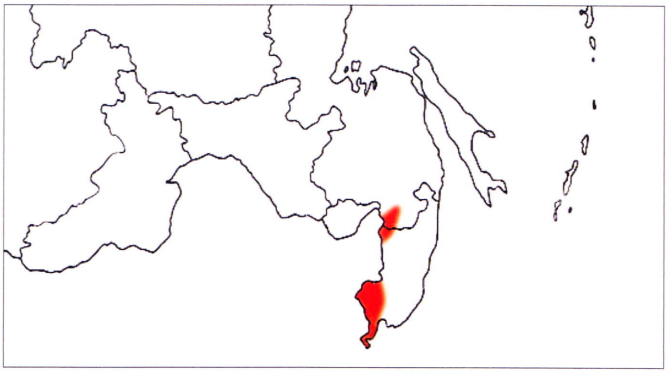
Both the scientific and the common name of this species allude to its type locality, the Amur River valley.

External appearance: Amur Grass Lizards may reach body lengths of 7.6 cm, with the tail being no less than twice as long as the body. They are slender lizards with large, strongly keeled dorsal scales arranged in 6–8 longitudinal rows. The dorsolateral scales are granular, weakly keeled and much smaller than the dorsal scales. Those covering the flanks are larger than the dorsolateral scales but still smaller than the dorsals, and aligned in 4–5 longitudinal rows. On each side of the thigh, in the inguinal region, there are 3–4 inguinal pores.

The rostral contacts the frontonasal along a wide seam. The prefrontals either touch each other or are separated by a small scale. The two large supraoculars are edged by a small scale on each side. The subocular reaches to the edge of the upper lip; the tympanic shield is well defined. Of the four pairs of infralabials, the fourth pair is the longest, and the first two are in contact along the midline of the throat. The collar is poorly developed.

Fig. 356: A juvenile Amur Grass Lizard lacking most of its tail. E. Dunayev

Fig. 357: Portrait of an Amur Grass Lizard. E. Dunayev



Map 73: *Takydromus amurensis.*

The Amur Grass Lizard is coloured brown, fulvous, greenish-blue or olive-grey above, sometimes with dark spots on the back. The lateral stripes are wide, dark, and extend from the temporal region all the way along the sides to the tail. A short, pale streak stretches along the sides of the neck. The belly is greenish-blue or olive-grey; the throat is paler than the rest. Juveniles are black.

Distinguishing features: The Amur Grass Lizard differs from the Korean Grass Lizard by its larger size, the presence of 3–4 inguinal pores on each side, its rostral scale contacting the frontonasals, and other characters.

Distribution and subspecies: The Amur Grass Lizard is found in north-eastern China, Korea, and in the southern regions of the Primorsky and the Khabarovsk territories of Russia.

No subspecies have been described.

Natural history: In the Far East, the Amur Grass Lizard lives in broadleaf and mixed cedar–broadleaf forests in warm areas: riverbanks and meadows, roadsides, clearings and forest edges, stony places and open, gentle mountain slopes. In tall grass, the Amur Grass Lizard holds on to the stems with its clinging fingers and its long, wriggling tail. The activity is diurnal. These lizards awake from hibernation in the first half of April or early May and leave

Figs. 358–359: An adult female of the Amur Grass Lizard (left), and a clutch of nine eggs (right). E. Dunayev

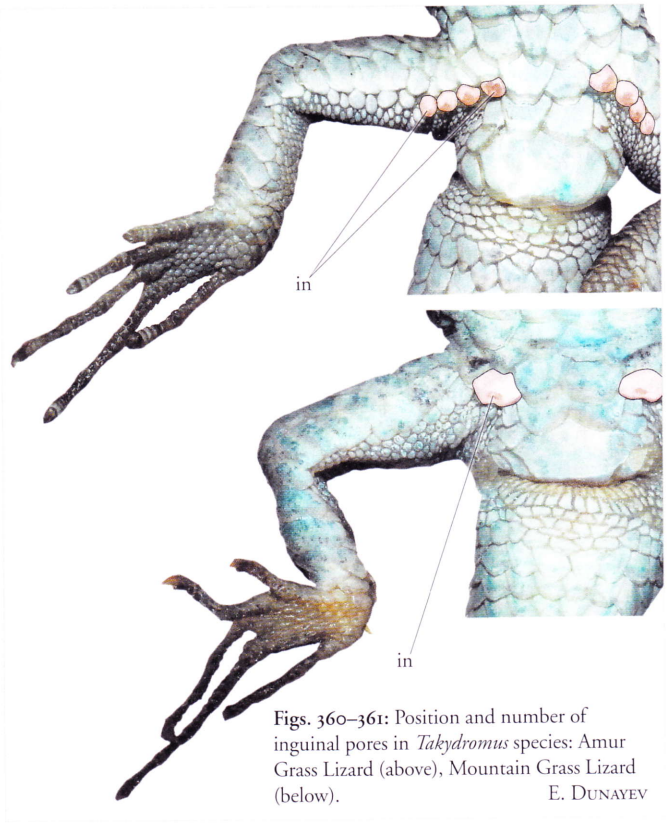
for overwintering in the second half of November. On the coast of the Sea of Japan, they appear earlier than in the mountains. The first clutches are laid at the end of May. In the northern part of the range, females produce 1–2 clutches per season, while in the south, three clutches of 2–8 eggs each, measuring 6.7–9.5 × 10.5–12.5 mm, are the norm. Each female lays on average 11–12 (up to 23) eggs per season. The young with body lengths of 2.6–2.9 cm hatch in late August or early September. Amur Grass Lizards reache sexual maturity, apparently, after their second winter. They feed on insects and their larvae, and other small invertebrates, mainly spiders.

Conservation status: Population numbers are stable within the species' range, **and** in no need of any conservation measures.

Mountain Grass Lizard
Takydromus wolteri Fischer, 1885
Figs. 360–364, Map 74

The Mountain Grass Lizard was originally described from North Korea, hence the Russian common name (Корейская долгохвостка = Korean Longtail) of the species.

External appearance: The Mountain Grass Lizard is a small and slender lacertid reaching a body length of 58 mm, with a tail of approximately twice this size. The rostral scale does not touch the frontonasal scale; it is separated from it by the nasal scale. Prefrontal scales contact each other or are separated by a small scale. The subocular scale widely touches the edge of the lip; the tympanic is well defined. There are four pair of infralabial scales; the line of the posterior edge of the third pair of these scales is straight. The collar is poorly developed.



Figs. 360–361: Position and number of inguinal pores in *Takydromus* species: Amur Grass Lizard (above), Mountain Grass Lizard (below). E. Dunayev

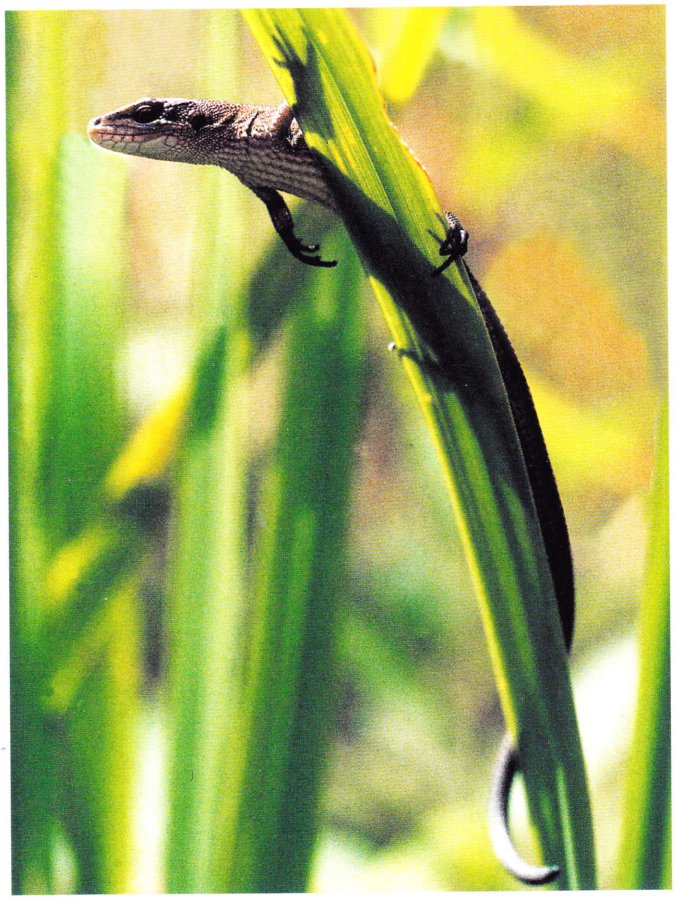
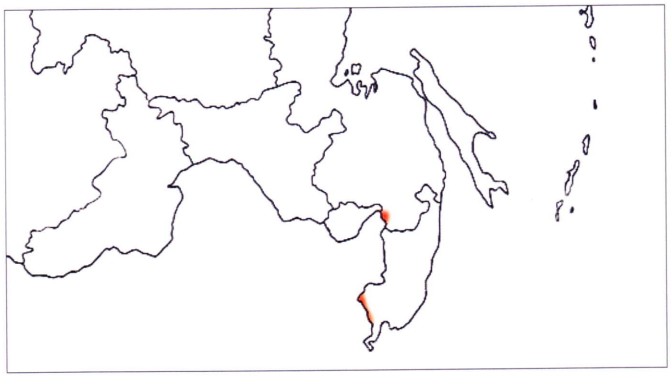


Fig. 362: Young Mountain Grass Lizards, *Takydromus wolteri*, are expert climbers. I. Maslova

The large dorsal scales, with low longitudinal keels, are arranged in 7–8 longitudinal rows. Vertebral and dorsolateral scales are keeled and several times smaller than the dorsal scales. The lateral scales are keeled and arranged in 2–3 longitudinal rows.

Mountain Grass Lizards are brown or olive-grey above, with a fulvous or black-brown stripe along the vertebral line that passes onto the tail. The wide, dark lateral stripes on the bottom are edged with a narrow, white or bluish line. The venter is yellowish-white, and the throat and chest are greenish-blue. Juveniles are dark, almost black.

Distinguishing features: The Mountain Grass Lizard is very similar to the Amur Grass Lizard, from which it differs by its smaller size, by having only one inguinal pore on each side, and by some other characters.



Map 74: *Takydromus wolteri.*