

## Project Update: June 2022

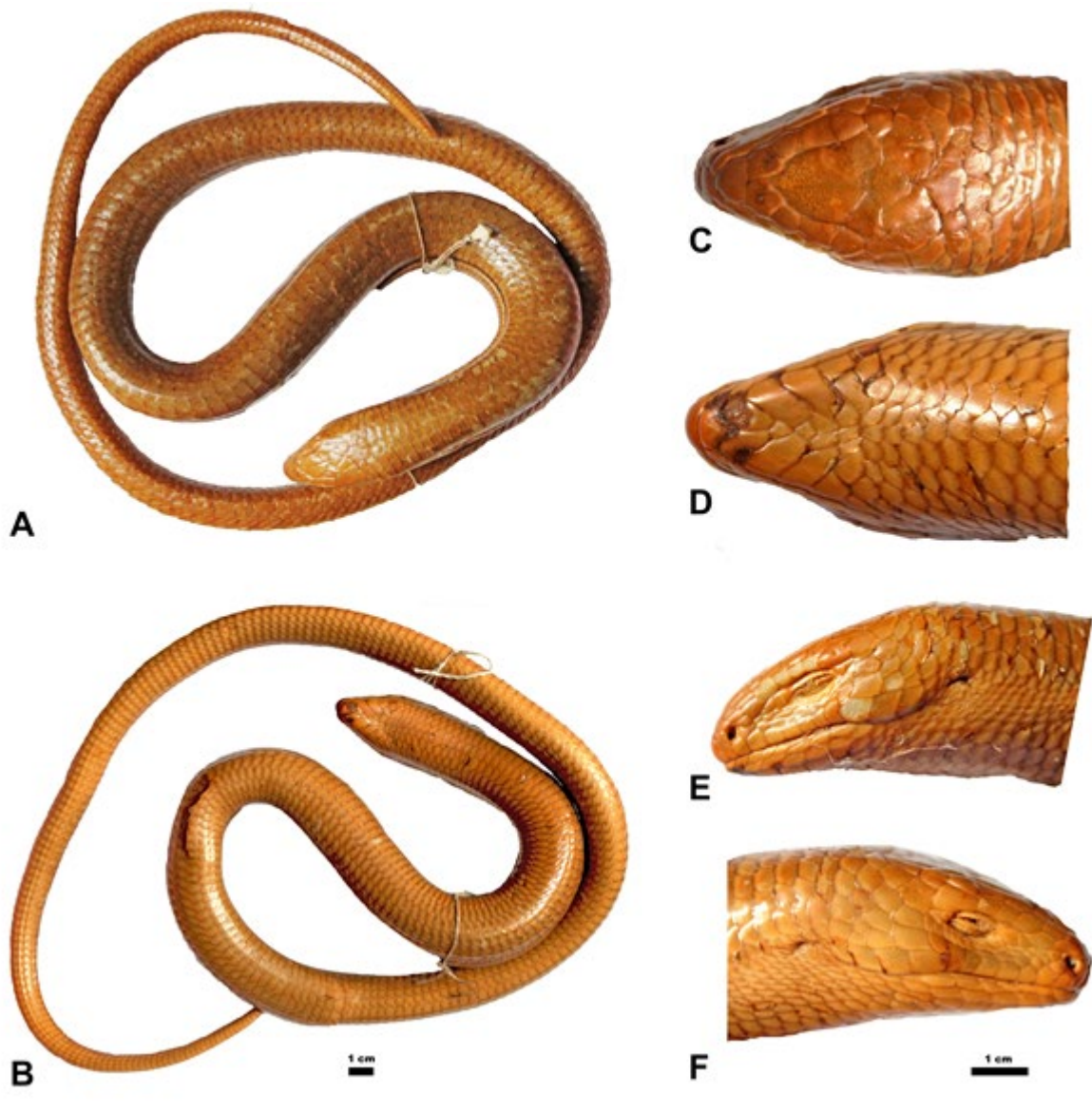
Last summer 2021 during expeditions, we collected several *Podarcis muralis* for parasitological analysis. Since this species was introduced to Ukraine, we tried to study whether this species can pose a threat to local fauna. As a result of the nine individuals of *P. muralis* examined, eight (88.9 %) were found infected with at least one helminth specimen. We revealed two helminth species from two taxonomic groups: nematodes (one species) and acanthocephalans (one species). Both species were collected from the digestive system of lizards. Nematodes of *P. muralis* found in this research were not mentioned in other surveys of the helminth fauna of lizards in Ukraine. Presumably, studied nematode species have been introduced to Ukraine through parasitising the common wall lizard. This assumption needs a separate investigation. The acanthocephala was found in other lizard species in the southern part of Ukraine. Acanthocephalans reach maturity in birds of the family Corvidae and apparently use *P. muralis* as a paratenic host.



During parasitological analysis.

We published a manuscript where we presented a study to be done as part of our project. During renovation of the museum collection room of the National Museum of Natural History at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv (NMNH) in 2021, we accidentally found the specimen of *Pseudopus apodus* (Anguillidae) originating from Odesa Oblast (Province) among other collected reptiles. The data show that the specimen belongs most likely to the nominotypical subspecies, *P. a. apodus* (Pallas, 1775). We discussed the possible origin of the record and we concluded that the specimen was introduced to Odesa most probably from its native range (Crimea or Caucasus). The uniqueness of the record and the past human-mediated interactions thus suggest an allochthonous origin rather than the historical sign of the relict population. Thus, our data clarify the situation on species distribution in the north-western Black Sea region from where we have still limited knowledge.

Reference: Oskyrko O., Lysenko R., Jablonski D. (2022). The sheltopusik (*Pseudopus apodus*) in southwestern Ukraine? Insights from the museum collection. *Evolutionary Systematics*, 6(1): 71–76.



The specimen of *Pseudopus apodus* from Odesa, Ukraine.

To date, we have collected 350 records of reptiles from the territory of Ukrainian Bessarabia. 206 records were collected from literary sources and 76 from open databases. We collected 202 records during field work. We also analysed the museum collections where we found 27 records for the study area.