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Notes on the diet of *Gallotia stehlini* (Fam. Lacertidae) as obtained from behaviour observations.

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ABSTRACT: Several observations of feeding in specimens of the lizard Gallotia stehlini from different localities in the island of Gran Canaria (Canary Archipelago) are described in detail. The observations were made when the general behaviour of the species was being studied. From the data obtained, the omnivorous diet of the species becomes manifest and is related with that of other Canarian lizard species.
Key words: Feeding, behaviour observations, lizards, Canary Islands.

RESUMEN: Se detallan varias observaciones de alimentación por parte de ejemplares del lagarto Gallotia stehlini de la isla de Gran Canaria (Archipiélago Canario) en diversas localidades. Dichas observaciones fueron realizadas cuando se estudiaba el comportamiento general de dicha especie. A partir de los datos obtenidos se apunta el omnivorismo de la especie y se relaciona con el presentado por otras especies de lagartos canarios.
Palabras clave: Alimentación, observación del comportamiento, lagartos, Islas Canarias.

Several behaviour observations have been made in the past (MOLINA-BORJA, unpublished) on the lizard from the island of Gran Canaria, Gallotia stehlini , specimens of which were seen feeding in several localities.

The observations were mainly made in San Nicolás de Tolentino (West of the island), Agüimes (Southeast), Tafira (near Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), Barranco de Tecén (near the town of Telde, East of the island) and Gáldar (Northwest).

In the locality of Agüimes, a juvenile lizard was seen eating the fruits of Plocama pendula (Fam. Rubiaceae) which were hanging from the plant branches very near the ground; this situation helped the lizard to reach the fruits from the ground. In another Canarian lizard species, G. galloti galloti, an animal climbed the same plant species and was seen to eat the fruits directly from the branches (MOLINA-BORJA, submitted). Many years ago, the above mentioned plant was shown to form part of the diet of G. stehlini (STEINDACHNER, 1891).

In the same locality, an adult individual was also seen eating buds of

Euphorbia obtusifolia obtusifolia (Fam. Euphorbiaceae) (MOLINA-BORJA, 1981b).

At Tafira, some specimens could be seen on a stone wall near the Jardín Canario. There an adult specimen was observed with a dragonfly in its mouth (Fig. 1) and another was eating dry leaves of Ricinus comunis (Fam. Euphorbiaceae) which had fallen to the ground (Fig. 2).

At the Barranco de Tecén locality, an adult lizard was observed to be eating the flowers and leaves of Salvia canariensis (Fam. Labiatae) from a branch situated near the ground.

Finally, and indirect observation was recently made (1985) in the vecinity of Gáldar, where several fruits of Opuntia dileni (Fam. Cactaceae) were seen to have been eaten by lizards (Fig. 3), because the marks observed on them are also typical of other lizard species like G. galloti galloti (MOLINA-BORJA, submitted).

Therefore, although the observations have been scattered it is easy to deduce the omnivorous kind of diet exhibited by the Gran Canaria lizard and which is mainly represented by vegetal matter and insects. Marine isopods (Ligia italica) have also been reported to be eaten in large amounts by this lizard (STEINDACHNER, 1891) and different fruits and animal matter in captivity conditions (BISCHOFF, 1974).

This omnivorism seems to be a rule for most Canarian lizards since it is also presented by other species like G. galloti galloti , G. g. eisentrauti (MOLINA-BORJA, 1981a and submitted), G. aff. simonyi (MARTINEZ-RICA, 1982; MACHADO, 1985) and G. atlantica from Lanzarote and Fuerteventura (LOPEZ-JURADO, 1981; MOLINA & BARQUIN, in press).

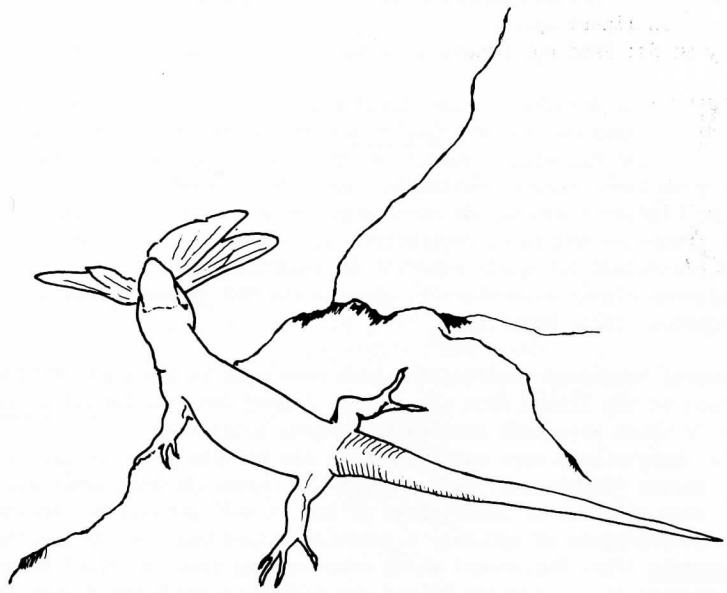
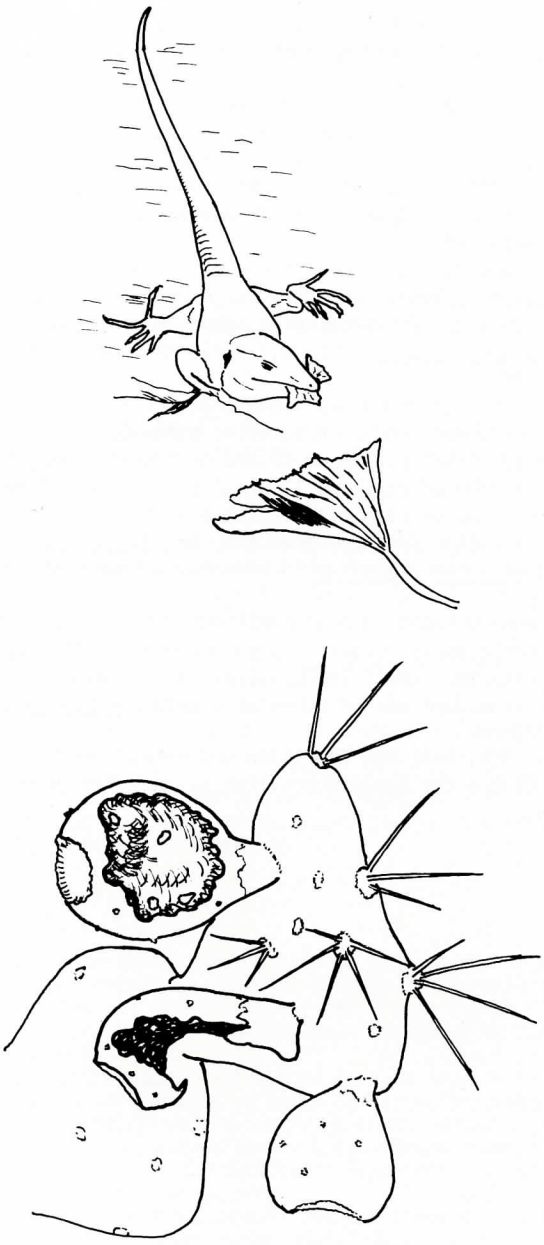


Fig. 1.- Adult specimen of G. stehlini eating a dragonfly.

Therefore, in this regard the Canarian lizards are similar to Lacerta dugesii from Madeira (SADEK, 1981) but differ from other lacertids which are known to be mainly insectivorous (AVERY, 1966).



Figs. 2 & 3.- Adult specimen of G. stehlini eating dry leaves of Ricinus comunis and marks on fruits of Opuntia dileni after being eaten by lizards.

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