

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A new record for the darkling beetle fauna of Israel: *Akis subtricastata* Redtenbacher, 1850 (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae)

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The distribution range of *Akis subtricastata* covers Iran, Iraq, Syria (Löbl *et al.* 2008; Eleyjian 2010) and Turkey (Keskin & Yağmur 2008). Löbl *et al.* (2008) does not list this species for Jordan; however, it has already been recorded from a few localities in this area. Katbeh-Bader (1996) mentioned it from Dhulayl and Waitzbauer *et al.* (2004) referred to the area of Petra and Wadi Arava (which is treated here as 'Arava Valley).



Fig. 1: General appearance of *Akis subtricastata*.

The senior author collected three specimens of *Akis subtricastata* (Fig. 1) in the southern area of the 'Arava Valley, Israel on the 12th of September 2014. This is the first record of this species in Israel. Further examination of the *Akis* specimens deposited in the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History Tel Aviv University, Israel (TAU), revealed three more specimens, all collected in 1968 by J. Klapperich (Bonn) during his 1956–1969 trip to Jordan. Bytinski-Salz (1969: 186) noted on Klapperich's collecting effort that "the material has been distributed to specialists, but nothing has been published so far". These three specimens are now the earliest known record from Jordan. It seems that these specimens were sent from Europe back to Israel without being taxonomically treated, and so *Akis subtricastata* remained unknown from Jordan until the publication of Katbeh-Bader (1996), which was based on a single specimen from Dhulayl.

In Israel, the beetles were collected around midnight with a flashlight. They were seen wandering actively on semi stabilized sand dunes near Samar. Further study is needed to clarify the distribution pattern of *Akis subtricastata* in Israel. The possibility of its existence in Saudi Arabia, which is bordering Jordan about 30 km south of Wadi Rum, where Klapperich collected the three specimens, is also naturally high and needs to be explored.

Material examined: Israel: 'Arava valley, 2 km NW of Elifaz, 12.ix.2014, 29°48'15"N 35°02'07"E, alt. 75 m., leg. O. Rittner (3 exx.). **Jordan:** Wadi Rum, 10.x.1968, leg. J. Klapperich (3 exx.) (TAU).

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