

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### First record of Piebald Shrew, *Diplomesodon pulchellus* (Lichtenstein, 1823) from Iran

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The Piebald Shrew, *Diplomesodon pulchellus* (Lichtenstein, 1823), also known as the Middle Asian Desert Piebald Shrew or Turkmenistan Desert Shrew, inhabits sandy deserts in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and in the Lower Volga area of Russia (Tsytulina, Formozov, & Sheftel, 2016). It prefers fixed and semi-fixed sand habitats (Figure 2), which are sparsely covered with Saxaul (*Haloxylon* sp.) (Wilson & Mittermeier, 2018; Volodin, Zaytseva, Ilchenko, Volodina, & Chebotareva, 2015). The Piebald shrew ranks as Least Concern (LC) in the IUCN Red List (Tsytulina et al., 2016). We found the species in northeast Iran, which is the first record in the country. A specimen was found dead on the roadside in Turan National Park about 5 km from the village of Zaman Abad, Semnan province (56.73°N, 35.61°E) on 29 August 2020. The voucher could not be preserved.



Figure 1. Piebald Shrew, *Diplomesodon pulchellum*, from northeast Iran, 29 August 2020. Photo: A. Mohammadalizadegan.

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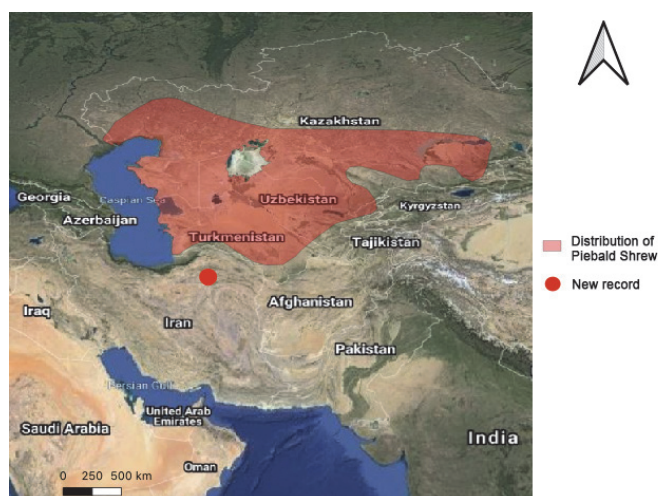


Figure 2. Distribution of the Piebald Shrew *Diplomesodon pulchellus* showing the location where it was found in Iran. Map adapted from IUCN Red List (Tsytsulina, Formozov, & Sheftel, 2016).

A distinctive white and dark-grey pattern makes the Piebald Shrews easily recognisable (Wilson & Mittermeier, 2018). All other shrews known from Iran are uniformly dark (Karami, Ghadirian, & Faizolahi, 2016). So far, 12 shrew species belonging to four genera were known to Iran (Yusefi, Faizolahi, Darvish, Safi, & Brito, 2019; Karami et al., 2016). The locality where the Piebald Shrew was found is approximately 300 km from the distribution range of the species in Turkmenistan.

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#### Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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