

● The National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins of the “Animals of the World” series depicting the European Green Lizard with the following face values:

On 17 April 2009

2 zł – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold,

On 21 April 2009

20 zł – struck in proof finish, in silver.

The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency in the Republic of Poland.

In addition to issuing coins and banknotes of general circulation, the NBP issues collector coins and banknotes. The issue of collector items is designed both to commemorate events, anniversaries and well-known personalities and to disseminate knowledge about Polish culture, science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing occasional Nordic Gold coins of 2 zloty denomination.

All coins and banknotes issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

NBP

National Bank of Poland

COINS



COINS ISSUED IN 2009 COINS ISSUED IN 2009

The NBP launched the “Animals of the World” series in 1993. The topic “The European Green Lizard” is the sixteenth item of this series.

Information on the schedule of issue and the sale of coins can be found at the websites:

www.nbp.pl
www.numizmatyka.nbportal.pl

The coins have been struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office



ANIMALS OF THE WORLD

The European Green Lizard
(*Lacerta viridis*)

Animals of the World: The European Green Lizard (*Lacerta viridis*)

● The European green lizard (*Lacerta viridis*) belongs to the true lizards family (Lacertidae) and subfamily Lacertinae. Currently, scientists distinguish 34 genera within the Lacertinae subfamily. Many of these inhabit Europe. In the context of recent changes in taxonomy, geographical range of the European green lizard extends over the Balkan Peninsula (probably excluding Peloponnese), Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Ukraine and Turkey.

● In historical terms, the European green lizard is one of the most mysterious and controversial representatives of the Polish herpetofauna. It was undisputedly a part of the Polish fauna prior to World War II, when the territories along the Dniester river constituted a part of Poland. After World War II, it was not until 1972 that some specimens of the species were caught near Ustroń, next to the former Czechoslovakia border. It was then suggested that the lizards came over from the Czech territory via the Moravian Gate. However, this claim has been disputed by some researchers as the place in which the lizards were caught does not conform to the habitat requirements of the European green lizard. Moreover, no specimen of the species has been reported to appear on the location ever since. Presumably, the animals had been intentionally brought from a site outside Poland. In the years

to follow, the occurrence of the European green lizard in Poland was again documented in the ruins of Siedlisko castle (Lubuskie province). However, it turned out that the lizards were not the members of the subspecies that might be found in Poland. Apparently, they were intentionally introduced and, furthermore, the breeder who let them loose was identified in Nowa Sól.

● The European green lizard is considered extinct on the territory of Poland. However, its occurrence in Poland still excites many people. Each year at least several people claim to have seen a specimen of the species; herpetologists amongst them. Hitherto, no credible evidence confirming these reports has been presented. Apparently, some of the witnesses confuse the European green lizard species with entirely green males of the very common sand lizard. However, one should remember that the European green lizard is a much larger species, measuring up to 40 cm in length (the body without tail measures up to 13.6 cm). In mating season, males are predominantly bright green and their throat is coloured bright blue, a feature missing in the sand lizard. Females and juveniles of the European green lizard may be brown or brownish green, speckled with dark spots and light dorsal stripes along their bodies. The specimens

of the European green lizard have long tails, which often measure twice the length of the rest of their body. Their legs are slender and equipped with long slim fingers.

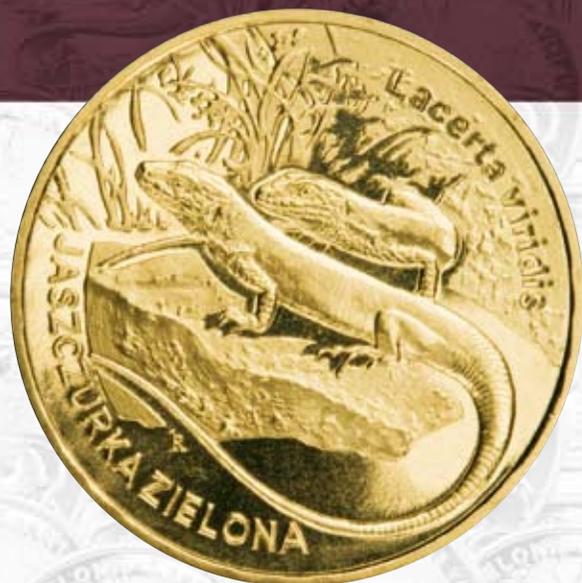
● In Europe, there are two similar and frequently confused species of the lizard: the Western green lizard - *Lacerta bilineata* (until recently considered the subspecies of the European green lizard) and the Balkan green lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*).

● The European green lizard is a stenothermic species. Depending on the latitude, it inhabits lowlands, highlands and mountains. It can be spotted in quite diverse environment: scrubby meadows, edges of woods, stony and scrubby steppes with manna ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) as well as road edges. Most often it stays on the ground, rocks or tree branches, from which it can deftly jump to the ground. While in danger, the European green lizard hides in burrows dug by itself or by other animals. In mating season males get very aggressive and they fight savagely for females; their clashes may lead to a serious injury if not death.

Tomasz Mazgajski

Museum and Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences

COINS ISSUED IN 2009 COINS ISSUED IN 2009



FACE VALUE **20** ZŁ

metal **925/1000 Ag** ■ finish **proof** ■ diameter **38.61 mm**
weight **28.28 g** ■ mintage (volume) **100,000 pcs**

OBVERSE: An image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. Under the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue, 2009. At the bottom, an inscription: ZŁ 20 ZŁ. The images of the national flag of the Republic of Poland on the sides of the Eagle's legs. At the top, a semicircular inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

REVERSE: In the centre, images of two lizards. The lizard on the left – standing on the rocks. In the background above and below, stylized images of plants. At the top, a semicircular inscription: JASZCZURKA ZIELONA – *Lacerta viridis*.

Obverse designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**
Reverse designer: **ROBERT KOTOWICZ**



FACE VALUE **2** ZŁ

metal **CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy** ■ finish **standard** ■ diameter **27.00 mm**
weight **8.15 g** ■ mintage (volume) **1,700,000 pcs**

OBVERSE: An image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. Under the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue: 2009, underneath, an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ. The images of the national flag of the Republic of Poland on the sides of the Eagle's legs. At the top, a semicircular inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

REVERSE: In the centre, two lizards on a rock. Above, stylized images of plants. On the left-hand side and at the bottom, a semicircular inscription: JASZCZURKA ZIELONA. At the top and on the right-hand side an inscription: *Lacerta viridis*.

ON THE EDGE: an inscription: NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**
Reverse designer: **ROBERT KOTOWICZ**