

**Name:** Yuval Itescu  
**Affiliation:** Institute of Biology, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany  
Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB)  
**Office Address:** Königin-Luise-Str. 1-3, Room 207, 14195, Berlin-Dahlem, Germany  
**Telephone:** office: +49 30 838 57296  
**E-Mail:** [yuvitescu@gmail.com](mailto:yuvitescu@gmail.com) (main)  
[yuvitescu@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:yuvitescu@zedat.fu-berlin.de)  
[itescu@igb-berlin.de](mailto:itescu@igb-berlin.de)  
**Date of birth:** 15 July 1983  
**Place of birth:** Haifa, Israel

**Academic education:**

**2018 -** Post doctoral researcher, Freie Universität Berlin & IGB Berlin  
**2017-2018** Post doctoral researcher, The Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv University  
**2013-2017** Ph.D., Zoology, Department of Zoology, Tel Aviv University  
Thesis title: "**Evolution on islands: testing the extent and consistency of the effects of island characteristics**" (Advisors: Prof. Shai Meiri, Tel Aviv University, and Prof. Panayiotis Pafilis, University of Athens)  
**2010-2012** M.Sc., Zoology, Department of Zoology, Tel Aviv University  
Thesis title: "**A biogeographic perspective on turtle evolution**" (Advisors: Prof. Shai Meiri, Tel Aviv University, and Prof. Pasquale Raia, University of Naples Federico II)  
**2006-2009** B.Sc., Biology, Faculty of Life Sciences, Tel Aviv University

**Academic and professional experience:**

Teaching assistant

**2020-** Methods in Ecology and Evolution, Freie Universität Berlin.  
**2014-2016** Biogeography, Tel Aviv University  
**2013-2014** Introduction to animal life, Tel Aviv University  
**2011-2012** Vertebrates: comparative anatomy and functional morphology, Tel Aviv University  
**2010** Vertebrates faunistics, Open University of Israel.

External reinforcement teacher

**2013-2014** Introduction to animal life, Student's Union of Tel Aviv University

Non-academic teacher

**2009- 2014** Guide, Tel Aviv-Ramat Gan's Zoological Garden ("The Safari Zoo")  
**2009- 2015** Guide and teaching assistant, Nature Campus, Tel Aviv University.

Research assistant

**2009-2010** Research assistant (Invertebrates ecology and taxonomy, in Prof. Tamar Dayan's Lab), Department of Zoology, Tel Aviv University

**Publications:**

Peer-reviewed publications:

**Itescu, Y.,** Fofopoulos, J., Schwarz, R., Lymberakis, P., Slavenko, A., Gavriilidi, I-A., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2021. The island of extremes: giants and dwarfs on a small remote island. *Russian Journal of Herpetology* 28: 225-230.

- Slavenko, E., Maza, E., and **Itescu, Y.** 2021. Results of the first herpetological survey of Israel's Mediterranean coastal islets. *Russian Journal of Herpetology* 28: 231-236.
- Schwarz, R., Stark, G., Antonopolous, A., **Itescu, Y.**, Pafilis, P., Chapple, D.G., and Meiri, S. 2021. Specialist versus generalist at the intraspecific level: functional morphology and substrate preference of *Mediodactylus kotschy* geckos. *Integrative and Comparative Biology* 61: 62-75.
- Meiri, S., Murali, G., Zimin, A., Shak, L., **Itescu, Y.**, Caetano, G., and Roll, U. 2021. Different solutions lead to similar life history traits across the great divides of the amniote tree of life. *Journal of Biological Research-Thessaloniki* 28: 1-17.
- Schwarz, R., **Itescu, Y.**, Antonopoulos, A., Gavriilidi, I-A., Tamar, K., Pafilis, P., and Meiri, S. 2020. Isolation and predation drive gecko life-history evolution on islands. *Biological journal of the Linnean Society* 129: 618-629.
- Itescu, Y.**, Foufopoulos, J., Pafilis, P., and Meiri, S. 2020. The diverse nature of island isolation and its effect on land-bridge insular fauna. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 29: 262-280.
- Itescu, Y.** 2019. Are island-like systems biologically similar to islands? A review of the evidence. *Ecography* 42: 1298-1314.
- Stark, G., Tamar, K., **Itescu, Y.**, Feldman, A., and Meiri, S. 2018. Cold and isolated ectotherms: drivers of reptilian longevity. *Biological journal of the Linnean Society* 125: 730-740.
- Itescu, Y.**, Schwarz, R., Donihue, C., Slavenko, A., Roussos, S.A., Sagonas, K., Valakos, E. D., Foufopoulos, J., Pafilis, P., and Meiri, S. 2018. Inconsistent patterns of body size evolution in co-occurring island reptiles. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 27: 538-550.
- Itescu, Y.**, Schwarz, R., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2018. Lizard tail-loss rates on islands are not governed by longer life spans. *Israel Journal of Ecology & Evolution* 63: 53-56.
- Kotsakiozi, P., Ilgaz, Ç., Jablonski, D., Kumlutaş, Y., Avcı, A., Meiri, S., **Itescu, Y.**, Kukushkin, O., Gvoždík, V., Scillitani, G., Roussos, S., Jandzik, D., Kasapidis, P., Lymberakis, P., and Poulakakis, N. 2018. Multilocus phylogeny and coalescent species delimitation in Kotschy's gecko, *Mediodactylus kotschy*: hidden diversity and cryptic species. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 125: 177-187.
- Roll, U., Feldman, A., Novosolov, M., Allison, A., Bauer, A., Bernard, R., Bohm, M., Castro-Herrera, F., Chirio, L., Collen, B., Colli, G.R., Dabul, L., Das, I., Doan, T., Grismer, L., Hoogmoed, M., **Itescu, Y.**, Kraus, F., LeBreton, M., Lewin, A., Martins, M., Maza, E., Meirte, D., Nagy, Z., Nogueira, C.C., Pauwels, O.S.G., Pincheira-Donoso, D., Powney, G., Sindaco, R., Tallowin, O., Torres-Carvajal, O., Trape, J.F., Uetz, P., Vidan, E., Wagner, P., Wang, Y.Z., Orme, D., Grenyer, R., and Meiri, S. 2017. The global distribution of tetrapods reveals a need for targeted reptile conservation. *Nature Ecology and Evolution* 1: 1677-1682.
- Itescu, Y.**, Schwarz, R., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2017. Intra-specific competition, not predation, drives lizard tail loss on islands. *Journal of Animal Ecology* 86: 66-74.
- Itescu, Y.**, Jamison, S., Slavenko, A., Tamar, K., Roussos, S.A., Foufopoulos, J., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2017. The herpetofauna of Folegandros Island (Cyclades, Greece). *Herpetozoa* 29: 183-190.
- Itescu, Y.**, Lewin, A., Slavenko, A., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2017. *Podarcis erhardii* (Erhard's wall lizard). Extreme morphology. *Herpetological Review* 48: 199-200.
- Goldberg, S. R., Bursey, C. R., Tallowin, O., **Itescu, Y.**, and Maza, E. 2017. *Hemorrhoids nummifer* (Asian Racer). Endoparasites. *Herpetological Review* 48: 213.
- Slavenko, A., Tallowin, O., **Itescu, Y.**, Raia, P., and Meiri, S. 2016. Late Quaternary reptile extinctions: size matters, insularity dominates. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 25: 1308-1320.

Lewin, A., Feldman, A., Bauer, A.B., Belmaker, J., Broadley, D.G., Chirio, L., **Itescu, Y.**, LeBerton, M., Maza, E., Meirte, D., Nagy, Z.T., Novosolov, M., Roll, U., Tallowin, O., Trape, J.F., Vidan, E., and Meiri, S. 2016. Patterns of species richness, endemism and environmental gradients of African reptiles. *Journal of Biogeography* 43: 2380-2390.

Sabath, N., **Itescu, Y.**, Feldman, A., Meiri, S., Mayrose, I., and Valenzuela, N. 2016. Sex determination, longevity, and the birth and death of reptilian species. *Ecology and Evolution* 6: 5207-5220.

Roll, U., Mittermeier, J.C., Diaz, G.I., Novosolov, M., Feldman, A., **Itescu, Y.**, Meiri, S., and Grenyer, R. 2016. Using Wikipedia page views to explore the cultural importance of global reptiles. *Biological Conservation* 204: 42-50.

Schwarz, R., Gavriilidi, I.-A., **Itescu, Y.**, Jamison, S., Sagonas, K., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2016. *Mediodactylus kotschy* in the Peloponnese peninsula, Greece: distribution and habitat. *Acta Herpetologica* 11: 179-187.

Slavenko, A., **Itescu, Y.**, Ihlow, F., and Meiri, S. 2016. Home is where the shell is: predicting turtle home range sizes. *Journal of Animal Ecology* 85: 106-114.

**Itescu, Y.**, Slavenko, A., Schwarz, R., Meiri, S., and Pafilis, P. 2016. A new record of *Chalcides ocellatus* (Forskål, 1775) from Kythnos Island, Greece. *Herpetozoa* 29: 98-100.

**Itescu, Y.**, Schwarz, R., Moses, M., Pafilis, P., and Meiri, S. 2016. Record sizes for the Turkish house gecko, *Hemidactylus turcicus*, from Aegean islands, Greece. *The Herpetological Bulletin* 138: 24-26.

Newbold, T., Hudson, L. N., Hill, S. L. L., Contu, S., Lysenko, I., Senior, R. A., Börger, L., Bennett, D., Choimes, A., Collen, B., Day, J., De Palma, A., Díaz, S., Echeverria-Londoño, S., Edgar, M., Feldman, A., Garon, M., Harrison, M. L. K., Ingram, D. J., **Itescu, Y.**, Kattge, J., Kemp, V., Kirkpatrick, L., Kleyer, M., Laginha Pinto Correia, D., Martin, C., Meiri, S., Novosolov, M., Pan, Y., Phillips, H. R. P., Purves, D. W., Robinson, A., Simpson, J., Tuck, S., Weiher, E., White, H. J., Ewers, R. M., Mace, G. M., Scharlemann, J. P. W., and Purvis, A. 2015. Global land-use impacts on local terrestrial biodiversity. *Nature* 520: 45-50.

Raia, P., Passaro, F., Carotenuto, F., Maiorino, L., Piras, P., Teresi, L., Meiri, S., **Itescu, Y.**, Novosolov, M., Baiano, M. A., Martinez, R., and Fortelius, M. 2015. Cope's rule and the universal scaling law of ornament complexity. *The American Naturalist* 186: 165-175.

Slavenko, A., **Itescu, Y.**, Fougopoulos, J., Pafilis, P., and Meiri, S. 2015. Clutch size variability in an ostensibly fix-clutched lizard: effects of insularity on a Mediterranean gecko. *Evolutionary Biology* 42: 129-136.

**Itescu, Y.**, Savyon, G., and Slavenko, A. 2015. *Eryx jaculus* (Sand Boa). Albinism. *Herpetological Review* 46: 103-104.

Meiri, S., Kadison, A., Novosolov, M., Pafilis, P., Fougopoulos, J., **Itescu, Y.**, Raia, P., and Pincheira-Donoso, D. 2014. The number of competitor species is unlinked to sexual dimorphism. *Journal of Animal Ecology* 83: 1302-1312.

**Itescu, Y.**, Karraker, N. E., Raia, P., Pritchard, P. C. H., and Meiri, S. 2014. Is the Island rule general? Turtles disagree. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 23: 689-700.

#### Papers currently under review:

Wolf, J. M., Jeschke, J. M., Voigt, C. C., and **Itescu, Y.** Urban affinity and its associated traits: a global analyses of bats. *Global Change Biology*.

Zimin, A., Zimin, S. V., Shine, R., Avila, L., Bauer, A., Böhm, M., Brown, R., Barki, G., Caetano, G. H. O., Castro Herrera, F., Chapple, D. G., Chirio, L., Colli, G. R., Doan, T. M., Glaw, F., Grismer, L. L., **Itescu, Y.**, Kraus, F., LeBreton, M., Martins, M., Morando, M., Murali, G., Nagy, Z. T.,

Novosolov, M., Oliver, P., Passos, P., Pauwels, O. S. G., Pincheira-Donoso, D., Ribeiro-Junior, M. A., Shea, G., Tingley, R., Torres-Carvajal, O., Trape, J., Uetz, P., Wagner, P., Roll, U., and Meiri, S. A global analysis of viviparity in squamates highlights its prevalence in cold climates and high elevations. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*.

Published abstracts:

Meiri, S., **Itescu, Y.**, Shacham, H., and Werner, Y. L. 2011. What tortoise is *Testudo floweri* from the negev, named by Bodenheimer (1935)? *Israel Journal of Ecology and Evolution* 57: 261.

Grants and fellowships:

**2019** Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers.

**2019** Minerva postdoctoral fellowship. (Declined)

**2018** TAU-FUB Postdoctoral Exchange Program fellowship.

**2017** The Steinhardt Museum of Natural History postdoctoral research fellowship.

**2016** The Zoological Society of Israel student travel grant.

**2015** The German-Israeli zoological initiative travel grant, German Zoological Society and the Zoological Society of Israel.

**2014** Adesman fund travel grant, Life Science faculty, Tel Aviv University.

Awards:

**2015** Excellence in teaching award, Life Science faculty, Tel Aviv University.

**2013** Excellence in research award for M.Sc. students, Life Science faculty, Tel Aviv University.

**2012** 3<sup>rd</sup> place award for best M.Sc. student's presentation in the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Beer Sheva, Israel.

M.Sc. student supervision/mentoring:

**2020-2021** **Janis Wolf**: A global analysis of urban bat affinity using species occurrence data

**2020** **Manuel Dols Castelles**: Mammal diversity in Australian cities

**2018-2019** **Juliane Noack**: Gulls and the city: the flexibility of the ecological niche

Undergraduate student supervision/mentoring:

**2017** **Hamutal Friedman**: The diet of insular *Mediodactylus kotschyi*

**2016-2017** **Keren-Or Vertheimer**: Reptile body size extremes on islands

**2016-2017** **Michael Mosses**: Population demography in *Mediodactylus kotschyi*

**2016-2017** **Aviv Bejerano**: The effect of urban environments on lizard body sizes

**2016** **Or Keissar**: The diet of an invasive gecko (*Tarentola annularis*) in Israel

**2016** **Yuval Werber**: Hedgehogs diet in Israel

**2015-2016** **Lihi Levin**: Body size evolution of snakes on islands

**2015-2016** **Eden Goshen**: Tail loss proportions in *Podarcis erhardii*

**2015** **Tamar Freud**: The effect of ectoparasite load on lizard body condition

**2015** **Simon Jamison**: Snake body size correlates on islands

**2015** **Hanna Salim**: Thermal biology of snakes

**2015** **Basil Awad**: Thermoregulation and diel activity in squamates

**2015** **Menachem Kurzits**: Lizard population density correlates on islands

**2014-2015** **Tamar Freud**: Turtle body size in the wild and in captivity

**2014** **Shani Levinkind**: Ecto-parasites in two gecko species

**2014** **Nir Einav**: Limb morphology evolution in *Mediodactylus kotschyi*

**2012-2014** **Noa Keidar**: Turtle species richness

**2012-2013** **Alex Slavenko**: Turtle home range size

**Membership in professional associations:**

- 2010-present** The Zoological Society of Israel  
**2011-present** International Biogeography Society (IBS)  
**2016** Greek Herpetology Society

**Invited seminars:**

- 2021** Tel-Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel  
**2021** Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany  
**2020** Humboldt day, International Biogeography Society (online event)  
**2019** Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Midreshet Ben-Gurion, Israel

**Active participation in scientific conferences (talks and posters):**

Leading author:

- 2019** The 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Jerusalem, Israel. Talk.  
**2019** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Israeli Conference for Conservation Science, Haifa, Israel. Poster.  
**2018** The 10<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin and 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Mediterranean Lizards, Tel Aviv, Israel. Talk.  
**2017** The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. Talk.  
**2016** The 53<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Rehovot, Israel. Talk.  
**2016** The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Island Evolution, Ecology and Conservation, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal. Talk.  
**2016** The 9<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin and 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium on Mediterranean Lizards, Limassol, Cyprus. Talk.  
**2016** The 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Zoology of Greece and Adjacent Regions, Heraklion, Crete. Talk.  
**2015** The 52<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Mikhmoret, Israel. Talk.  
**2015** The 8<sup>th</sup> International Biogeography Society Meeting, Bayreuth, Germany. Two posters.  
**2014** Israeli Herpetology Symposium 2014, Tel Aviv, Israel. Talk.  
**2013** The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. Talk.  
**2013** The 8<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin, Koper, Slovenia. Talk.  
**2013** The 7<sup>th</sup> International Biogeography Society Meeting, Miami, Florida, U.S.A. Poster.  
**2012** The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Beer Sheva, Israel. Talk.  
**2011** The 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. Talk.  
**2011** The 16<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Herpetology, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg and Trier, Germany. Talk.  
**2010** The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Arachnological Society of Israel, Ramat Hanadiv, Israel. Talk.

Co-Author:

- 2018** The 10<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin and 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Mediterranean Lizards, Tel Aviv, Israel. Four talks and one poster.  
**2017** The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. Three talks.  
**2016** The 9<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin and 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium on Mediterranean Lizards, Limassol, Cyprus. Three talks.  
**2016** The 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Zoology of Greece and Adjacent Regions, Heraklion, Crete. One Talk.  
**2015** The 52<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Mikhmoret, Israel. Two talks, and a poster.

- 2015** The 8<sup>th</sup> International Biogeography Society Meeting, Bayreuth, Germany. Two posters.  
**2014** The 51<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. Two talks.  
**2013** The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel. One talk.  
**2012** World congress of herpetology, Vancouver, Canada. One talk.  
**2010** The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Zoological Society of Israel, Jerusalem, Israel. One poster.

**Active participation in workshops:**

- 2011** Global Assessment of Reptile Distributions Workshop, Tel Aviv University, Israel. Talk.

**Conference organizing committee member**

- 2018** The 10<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin and 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Mediterranean Lizards, Tel Aviv, Israel. June 2018.

**Journals for which I reviewed Manuscripts:**

Journal of Biogeography, Israel Journal of Ecology and Evolution, Ecology and Evolution, Current Zoology, Global Ecology and Biogeography, Biology Letters, Herpetological review, Behavioral Ecology, Plos One, South American Journal of Herpetology, Biological Journal of the Linnean Society, Oikos, Neobiota, Ecography, Royal Society Proceedings B.

**Theses I refereed:**

- 2019** **Adriaan Jordaan** (University of the Free State, South Africa), M.Sc. thesis.