

home [trip reports](#) [lizards](#) [about](#) [links](#)



Andalucia, 10. - 18.03.2012

Western Andalusia is a "must" for all those interested in herpetofauna and in spring 2012 we had the chance to visit this area. At the top of our wish list were *Podarcis vaucheri*, *Blanus mariae* and *Psammadromus occidentalis* - a species newly described in spring 2012.



El Rocio

Apart from the species mentioned above we hoped for some nice pictures of *Podarcis carbonelli*, *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*, *Chamaeleo chamaeleon*, some snakes and interesting amphibians. Because this year Western Andalusia had the driest winter for decades, we did not succeed in amphibian photography (25 °C, sunny and dry every day). The places visited are well known among herpers so we do not mention any locality data. Special thanks to Christoph Riegler and Jeroen Speybroeck.

10.03.2012

Arrival at Malaga airport and pass over to El Rocio in Donana National Park. During a first excursion in the National Park we found nothing except the omnipresent juveniles of *Psammadromus algirus* for a long time. In the evening we were able to photograph *Psammadromus occidentalis* (our first new species). Later we found some - pale-colored and less photogenic - *Podarcis vaucheri*.



*Psammadromus occidentalis* - The recently described species previously considered as *Psammadromus hispanicus*

11.03.2012

An excursion to a habitat of *Podarcis hispanicus* (type 2) in the north was a total failure: boring eucalyptus forests, no reptiles except *Psammadromus algirus*. At least, on the way back a wild dump brought an adult *Hemorrhhois hippocrepis*.



Hemorrhois hippocrepis - one of the most beautiful snakes of Europe

12.03.2012

Our visit of a chameleon habitat wasn't successful at first. But then, a local took us to a bush and told us that the chameleons could be seen here at 14:00 pm - and he was actually right! At this time we found a subadult and three juvenile European chameleons (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*). On our way back a stop-over at a ruin brought *Psammodromus algirus*, *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*, *Blanus mariae* and again *Hemorrhois hippocrepis*.



The star of the scenery: *Chamaeleo chamaeleon*



Chameleon-Stalking #1



Chameleon-Stalking #2



Juvenile chameleon on a branch



Adult *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*



*Blanus mariae* – another new species for us



Herping holidays are fun...



13.03.2012

First attempt to photograph Podarcis carbonelli: When we arrived in the habitat, the lizards were fully warmed up already and very hectic – no good photo results. In the afternoon: Sightseeing in Seville.



Podarcis carbonelli – first attempt



"Sightseeing" in Seville

14.03.2012

Second attempt in the carbonelli habitat – with better results, this time. Back at the parking we discovered that someone had broken into our car. Luckily we had no valuables inside! We were able to exchange the car at Seville Airport. Afterwards we moved to the area of Cadiz. In the afternoon we visited this beautiful city.



Podarcis carbonelli – second attempt...



... a juvenile with contrasty pattern



A magnificent Podarcis carbonelli...



... and the photographer



Meanwhile others were interested in our car



Impressive Ficus macrophylla in Cadiz

15.03.2012

Search for *Podarcis vaucheri* in Los Alcornocales National Park - A few shots of these lizards were made quickly, we also found *Blanus mariae* and *Macroprotodon brevis*, *Hemorrhois hippocrepis* as well as some interesting plants.



Three in one: *Blanus mariae* under a stone



Male *Podarcis vaucheri* - one of the "must haves" of this trip



Podarcis vaucheri with remarkable turquoise colored back



Adult Macroprotodon brevis



Ophrys tenthredinifera – this and Ophrys bombyliflora were the only orchids of this trip



Detail of *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* - a carnivorous plant



*Scilla monophyllos*



The cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) of the region are covered with epiphytic ferns - which obviously have suffered from the dry winter

16.03.2012

Driving a lot – with no results ...



Road in the dunes...



Holiday picture at the southern tip of the European continent: Tarifa



Podarcis vaucheri at the hotel in the evening sun - a good omen for the next day ...

17.03.2012

We decided to re-visit the Podarcis vaucheri site in the Alcornocales National Park. There we found numerous Podarcis vaucheri and some other species - this should turn out to be the most successful day of the trip!



Podarcis vaucheri country



The first Podarcis vaucheri spotting out of a crevice - an animal with orange throat



no comment ...



Spring fever, Part 1



A remarkably pretty colored female



Spring fever part 2: visual contact...



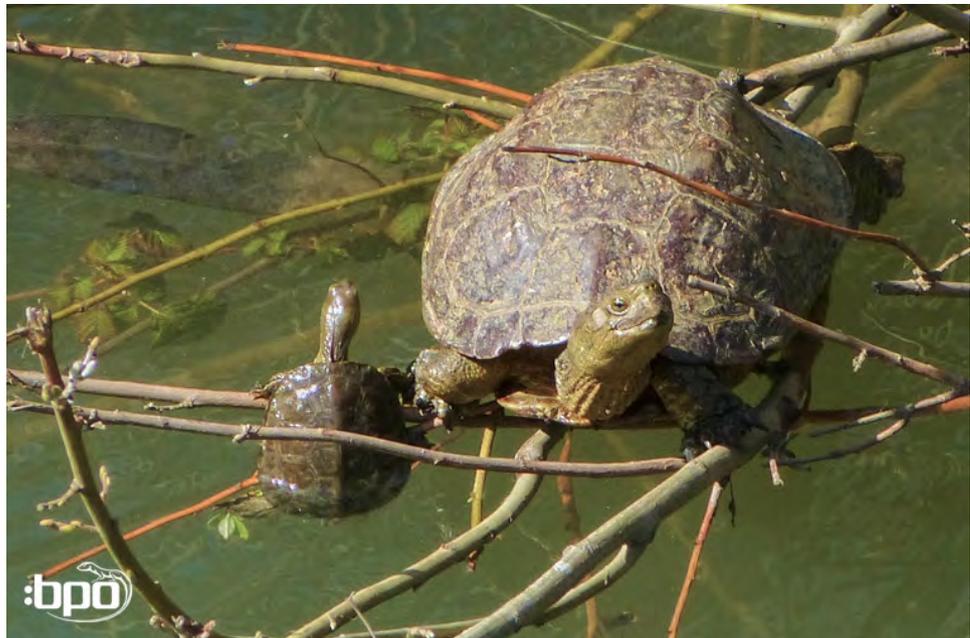
Tail nibbling...



A massive Tarentola mauritanica observed the scene



Mauremys leprosa in its spa ...



...and sunbasking



Juvenile Macroprotodon brevis



Adult *Psammodromus algirus*: the juveniles are very common but photographing the adults can be tricky.



Subadult *Timon lepidus* - the only ocellated lizard of our journey

18.03.2012

We visited another chameleon habitat which unfortunately was full of litter. No chameleons but at least some *Acanthodactylus*. In the evening: Return flight to Dusseldorf.



Juvenile *Acanthodactylus erythrurus* - our farewell photo in Andalusia

The home of European lizards - by Birgit & Peter Oefinger!