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Rhodos & Kastellorizo, 12. - 19.03.2011

We had been on Rhodos before but we didn't find *Blanus strauchi* so far – hence we wanted to try it again! Furthermore, Rhodos is a good starting point for visiting the Island of Kastellorizo. There we wanted to search for *Lyciasalamandra luschani* and the local snake-eyed skinks in particular.



Lacerta trilineata

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We arrived on Rhodos on March 12 in the evening and left on March 19 in the morning. In between, we had six adventurous days of herp-hunting and photographing plants. Furthermore we highly appreciated our stay at [Spanos Studios](#) in Lardos / Rhodos - the botanists' meeting point of the island.



13.03.

Visit of some coastal reptile habitats in Southern Rhodos with *Laudakia stellio*, *Anatololacerta oertzeni*, *Lacerta trilineata*, *Ophisops elegans* and *Chalcides ocellatus*. Later on, we searched for orchids - *Ophrys speculum*, *Ophrys regis-ferdinandis*, *Ophrys tenthredinifera*, *Ophrys ferrum-equinum*, *Ophrys lucis*, *Orchis collina* and *Orchis papilionacea* were found.



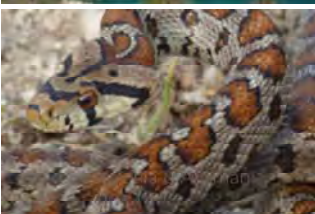
Juvenile *Chalcides ocellatus* – for us, one of the most beautiful European reptiles



A quite alert Ophisops elegans



Coastal habitat in Southern Rhodes





Ophrys regis-ferdinandis



Ophrys lucis – a rather rare species

14.03.:

Transfer to Kastellorizo! There, we started searching for *Lyciasalamandra luschani* and snake-eyed skinks. The small island of Kastellorizo (9 sq km) has sparse vegetation and is rather overgrazed – the most interesting habitats can be found in the surrounding of Megisti village with its gardens and a pine forest relic. The only wetland is part of a military camp and therefore couldn't be visited by us.



Andalucia, 10. - 18.03.2012



northern Spain, 02. - 13.06



Aegean Islands, 28.05. - 13.06.2011



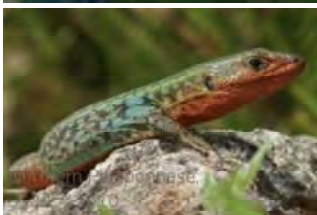
Kastellorizo



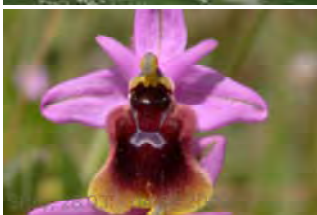
central Spain, 25.09. - 03.10.2010



Alps, 05. - 17.07.2010



Andalucia, 10. - 18.03.2012



Kastellorizo



The snake-eyed skins of Kastellorizo look like *Ablepharus budaki*, but genetically they differ from that species as well as from *A. kitaibelii*. Hence they should be considered as an own species.



Ablepharus „kitaibeli“ on Kastellorizo has – in contrast to the snake-eyed skinks in over Greek areas – large, visible ear openings.



A yellowish specimen of *Lyciasalamandra luschani* – these animals could be found everywhere on the island, sometimes in amazing population density.



While some are already relaxing in the sun others still have to photograph...



...a red-colored male of *Lyciasalamandra luschani*



Surprisingly we came across this *Anadololacerta oertzeni* – according to literature, that species doesn't occur on Kastellorizo. We didn't find out if it was a single introduced specimen or if a population of these lizards exists on the island.



Laudakia stellio is widespread on the island



Wow! A red colour morph of *Laudakia stellio*?...



...no: these guys were just dirty!

15.03.:

Once more, Kastellorizo: According to our literature 10 species of amphibians and reptiles can be found on the island. We only found 7 species – among these two species that should occur on Kastellorizo:

Species according to literature	Species found by us
<i>Lyciasalamandra luschani</i>	<i>Lyciasalamandra luschani</i>
	<i>Bufo viridis</i> (DOR)
<i>Cyrtopodion kotschy</i>	<i>Cyrtopodion kotschy</i>
<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>	
<i>Ophiomorus punctatissimus</i>	
<i>Ablepharus „kitaibelii“</i>	<i>Ablepharus „kitaibelii“</i>
<i>Laudakia stellio</i>	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>
<i>Blanus trauchi</i>	
	<i>Anatololacerta oertzeni</i>
<i>Hemorrhhois nummifer</i>	

Dolichophis jugularis	Dolichophis jugularis
Malpolon insignitus	



Kastellorizo harbour



Photo session with *Cyrtopodion kotschy...*



...and that's the model



Juvenile *Dolichophis jugularis*

16.03.:

Back to Rhodos. Having arrived there, we started a semi-successful photo safari at the east coast.



Anatololacerta oertzeni with bright blue spots on the flanks



Portrait of Anatololacerta oertzeni



An adult *Chalcides ocellatus*



Zerynthia cerisyi



Orchis collina – we could find numerous of this early flowering orchid



Ophrys cretica



Ophrys iricolor

17.03.:

We went to northern Rhodos for searching *Blanus strauchi* (Thanks to Thomas Bader and Ilias Strachnisis for providing habitat information!). Later on, we started a field trip tot he mountains.



Hitting the jackpot: Within only five minutes we found *Blanus strauchi*!



Portrait of *Blanus strauchi*: Note the degenerated eye and the flicking tongue.



Anatololacerta oertzeni



Ophisops elegans



Spring flowers in the mountains: Romulea ramiflora...



...Crocus biflorus and...



...Narcissus tazetta




Ablepharus kitaibelii



Juvenile Lacerta trilineata - sunbasking



 Pelophylax bedriagae



 Bufo viridis

18.03.:

The only rainy day during our stay: no reptiles but some nice flowers instead.



Paeonia clusii subsp. *rhodia*



Ophrys calypsus

19.03.:

Back home to Düsseldorf.

Literature:

Stratis Valakos and Dimitris Papapanacioto: The Herpetofauna of Kastellorizo (Megisti) Island (SE Aegean Archipelago); British Herpetological Society Bulletin, No. 13, 1985

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