



### Mallorca / Alicante - 15.-23.03.2014

What to do if you want to photograph *Podarcis pityusensis* but don't want to spend a whole week on Ibiza / Formentera? The solution is flying to Mallorca, photograph the introduced populations of this species and afterwards you can easily travel from Mallorca to other destinations in Spain. So, for this year's season opening, we first spent two days on Mallorca and then visited the Alicante area on mainland Spain. Overall, the result of this season warm-up tour was 16 reptile species. Thanks to Mike Zawadzki and Bobby Bok.



City-herping in Palma de Mallorca



Southeastern Spain, 10.2016  
11.2017

15.3.

We arrived on Mallorca in the afternoon and went directly to Palma. Beneath the cathedral there is a population of introduced *Podarcis pityusensis*. These lizards as well as the omnipresent *Tarentola mauritanica* were photographed quickly and afterwards we did what you would expect from tourists on Mallorca: numerous street cafes allured with cold beer and we didn't try too hard to resist this seduction.



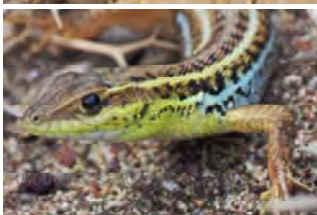
Jonian Islands, 25.5.-5.6.2017



14.2017



*Podarcis pityusensis*





Pyrenees, 2008 - 2016



Sicily & Aeolian Islands, 2016  
6.6.2016



Spain, 2015  
1.9.2015



11.7.2015



Macro Photography # 1: Tarentola mauritanica

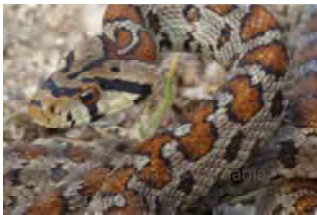


Macro photography # 2: Cerveza Estrella

16.3.

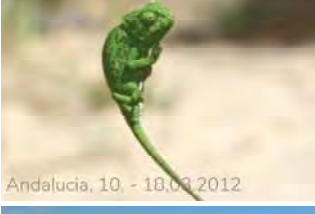


Spain, 29 Dec 14.9.2014



Mallorca / 2016

Like on Menorca (see our 2013 report) the native Balearic lizard (*Podarcis lilfordi*) is extinct on Mallorca and can only be found on the offshore islets. One of these islets has been connected to the mainland by a pier and thus can be approached easily. The subspecies status of lizards on that islet is not clear: On the surrounding islands, the melanistic subspecies *jordansi* occurs; the Cabrera Archipelago south of Mallorca is populated by subspecies *kuligae*. The animals in the habitat we visited seem to be hybrids of two subspecies - probably, the *kuligae* specimen were introduced by tourist boats on this islet. The lizards were extremely shy, which might have to do with the fact that this place is preferably used as a dog toilet. So, cute dogs and their lordies frequently trample through the bushes. Nevertheless, the population seems to be vital - we estimate >50 animals - and we even could see the lizards in the hotel gardens of the adjacent mainland: the species is back on the Majorcan mainland.



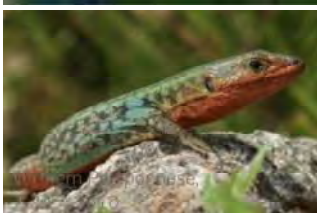
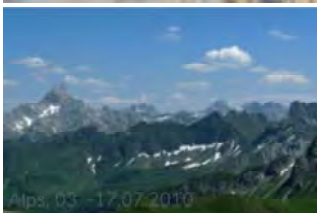
Birgit at work



Podarcis lilfordi - jordansi phenotype



Podarcis lilfordi - kuligae phenotype



and their hybrids - very nice!



another one



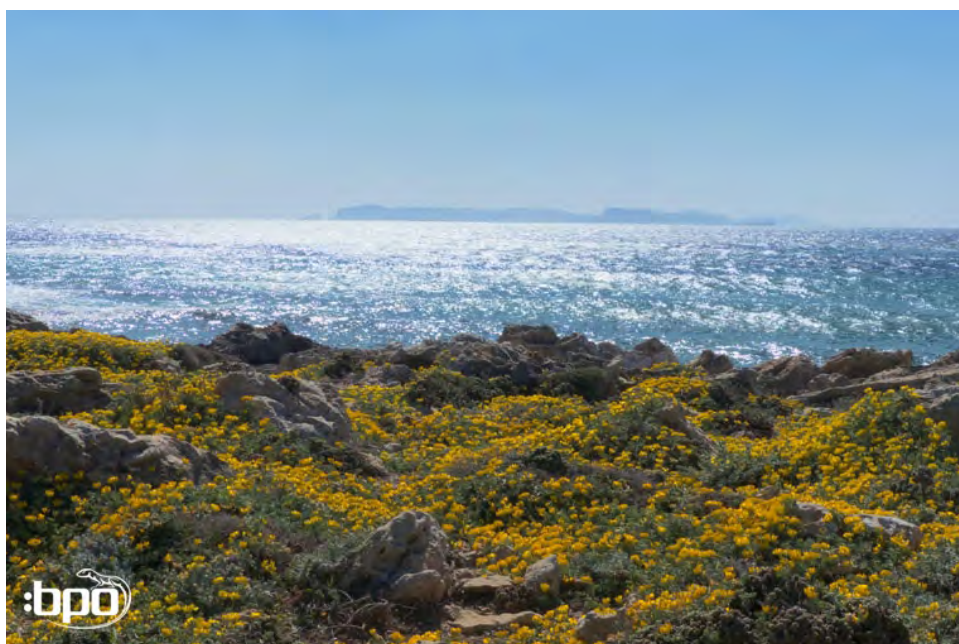
and one more - yeah!



With a little patience, beautiful portrait shots were possible



Podarcis lilfordi with fashionable accessory on its wrist



View to the Cabrera Archipelago

17.3.

We visited another population of introduced *Podarcis pityusensis* near Palma. The animals live in a touristic beach area, where they occur in high population density. Apparently they got accustomed to people and were easy to photograph - the whole setting was like a zoo visit, but it was a lot of fun. In the afternoon we took the plane to Alicante and arrived at Santa Pola, our next station, in the evening.



Lizard Habitat



A wall full of lizards



Curious Podarcis pityusensis



Morning toilet



Common sunbasking



Did anyone here drop a chocolate cookie?



All You Can Eat...

18.3.

The province of Alicante is home of about 20 reptile species. This sounded pretty promising for us and highly motivated we started herping. Our first goal was a dune area south of Santa Pola. There, our target species was *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*: We didn't have good pictures of adult animals of this species so far - now we had the opportunity. The area proved to be quite efficient: we found six species at this place.





Dune habitat



*Acanthodactylus erythrurus* - juvenile



*Acanthodactylus erythrurus* - subadult



Acanthodactylus erythrurus - adult



Psammodromus edwardsianus



Nonsense #1: Blanus cinereus - as commonly known, this species lives on tree branches



Nonsense #2: Hemidactylus turcicus - sunbasking animals rarely seen



Juvenile Rhinechis scalaris



Juvenile Timon nevadensis



Timon nevadensis: The adult animals were extremely shy - about 30 meters flight distance!

19.3.

From Santa Pola we took a boat trip to Tabarca, a small island with interesting herpetofauna. After one and a half hours we had seen what we wanted to see and took the next boat back. In the afternoon we visited the reserve of El Hondo, an extensive wetland which turned out to be less productive as we had hoped. Most parts of the area were difficult to access, not the best herping place. Anyhow, we found some *Natrix maura* under some litter. So far, everything went like clockwork - so we did what tourists in Santa Pola are expected to do: Nice sidewalk cafes allured us with cold beer...



Habitat on Tabarca island...



and its inhabitants: Chalcides bedriagai...



and Coronella girondica - about to shed its skin



The reserve El Hondo



Beautiful Natrix maura



Another Natrix maura

20.3.

In the morning, we explored a coastal section where *Podarcis hispanicus* occurs. Here, we almost stumbled over an adult *Malpolon monspessulanus* - an impressive, large snake! In the afternoon we went to Torrevieja, a place with more than 100.000 inhabitants in a post-apocalyptic touristic scenery: an insider tip for all who want to spent their holidays between English sports bars, Chinese fast food restaurants and Indian souvenir shops. The lagoon of La Mata, a nature reserve, is situated like an island in between the hotels and appartments. There, we could take some more pictures of *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*. In the evening, we left the coast and moved to the mountains of northern Alicante province where we hoped to find further reptile species.



The coast near Santa Pola - habitat of...



*Psammodromus edwardsianus*...



*Podarcis hispanicus* (Spanish Wall Lizard) and...



Malpolon monspessulanus



The nature reserve of La Mata



Juvenile Acanthodactylus erythrurus and...





...a beautiful adult

21.3.

The mountains of the northern province of Alicante are one of the few areas in Europe where even in winter numerous reptiles can be found. Now, in spring we had high expectations: We expected the lizards and snakes to literally stand in line to be photographed by us. To our surprise, we found significantly fewer reptiles than in winter, even the very common *Podarcis liolepis* proved to be less abundant than expected.



A nice mountain habitat - but where are the reptiles?



Pancake position: Podarcis liolepis warming up in the sun



Psammodromus edwardsianus



Tarentola mauritanica



Timon nevadensis - extremely shy, again



Psammodromus algirus

22.3.

Cold and windy - bad conditions for herping. After the relatively successful past few days, we were disappointed. Gratitude is obviously not the core strength of the herpers: If, after six successful days, the seventh day does not deliver he will be offended. We spent the remaining time with photographing spring flowers. On 23.3. we had to take our return flight to Düsseldorf and at finally sighting of our photo material we were at least a little bit grateful...



Sleeping Podarcis liolepis



Frittilaria lusitanica



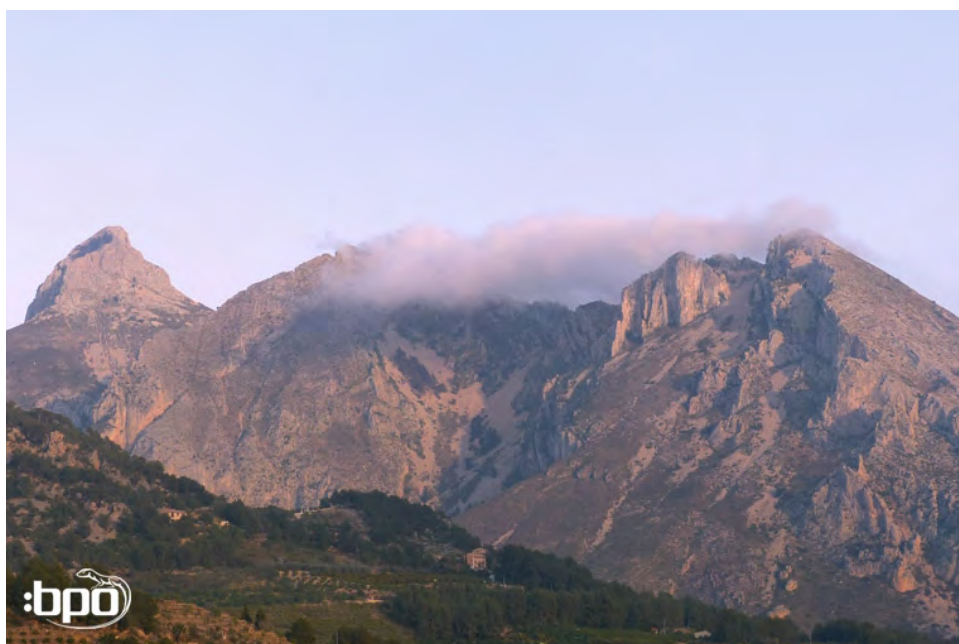
Ophrys lucentina - an endemic orchid of the northern province of Alicante



Orchis olbiensis



Romulea columnae



Adios y hasta luego!