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Northern Peloponnese, 3.-11.4.2010

This year we visited some areas in the Northern part of Peloponnese: Argolis, Parnon, Stymphalia and Feneos basin. Due to an extraordinary dry spring we saw less orchid species than we expected – in particular, the coastal areas were rather dry. In contrast to that, overall we were successful in searching for reptiles.



The Parnon mountains

Parnon

For the first days, we were based near the city of Nauplio. From there, we had a trip to the Parnon mountains for reptile hunting. We had received a hint that *Podarcis erhardii* could be found there. But, unfortunately we only found *Podarcis peloponnesiacus*. In addition, we came across some *Hellenolacerta graeca* and some very shy *Lacerta trilineata*. After some hours, we abandoned our search.



Podarcis peloponnesiacus thais has a white instead of an orange throat

On our way back we had a stopover at some quite promising wetlands at the coast. There we saw merely some – again very shy – *Lacerta trilineata* and *Emys orbicularis*. Meanwhile we had 25 °C and sunshine. Hence, we spent our remaining time at the beach that day.



Pyrenees, 2008 - 2016



Sicily & Aeolian Islands, 2016
6.6.2016



Sicily, 2015 - 21.9.2015



Sicily, 2015 - 11.7.2015



Sardinia, 29.8.14.9.2014



Mallorca / 2016



Wetlands south of Nauplio



Emys orbicularis

Argolis-Peninsula

On the Argolis-Peninsula *Podarcis peloponnesiacus* ssp. *thais* occurs. We noticed that lizard even in touristic areas at the coast. Furthermore, we wanted to visit a population of *Chalcides ocellatus* in that area. As we still had warm weather, the search for that species was rather difficult. After a long drive, intensive search and numerous stones turned we just saw a single one *Chalcides ocellatus* escaping. We didn't manage to take a picture. Subsequently, we only saw few species: *Lacerta trilineata*, *Typhlops vermicularis* and some *Pelophylax* sp.. Our highlight that day was an adult *Testudo marginata*. A little bit frustrated we decided to leave Argolis and go to the mountain areas of Stymphalos and Feneos the next day.



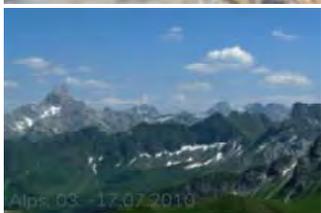
Coastline near Nauplio



Podarcis peloponnesiacus thais



A pair of P. peloponnesiacus sunbasking: We had seen Lacerta sp. "snuggling" with one another but we hadn't noticed that behaviour at Podarcis before.



Testudo marginata. Note the dry vegetation!



In absence of alternatives we even photographed frogs...

Stymphalian Lake

The region of the Stymphalian Lake turned out to be a rich area for herping and we also found several orchids there. The lake is inhabited by myriads of frogs – their croaking generates an impressive soundscape.



Landscape at the Stymphalian Lake



Podarcis tauricus is very common at the lake...



...usually, the species is rather shy but this one tolerated to be photographed



Juvenile Hierophis gemonensis...



...another Hierophis gemonensis



Young Zamenis situla...



...and a bigger specimen



Ophrys aesculapii is quite abundant at the lake – for us, it was a new species. Other species we saw were *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys mammosa*, *Ophrys spruneri*, *Orchis quadripunctata* and *Cephalanthera longifolia*.



Juvenile *Anguis cephalonicus* with characteristic golden-black pattern



Ablepharus kitaibelii



Portrait of *Ophiomorus punctatissimus*



A juvenile *Ophiomorus punctatissimus*: juvenile specimen have dark flanks and bronze-coloured backs



Habitat of *Podarcis tauricus*, *Anguis cephalonicus*, *Ophiomorus punctatissimus* and *Ablepharus kitaibelii*



Testudo hermanni: This specimen obviously didn't want to be photographed and therefore didn't come out of its carapace



Where frogs occur, *Natrix natrix* also can be found



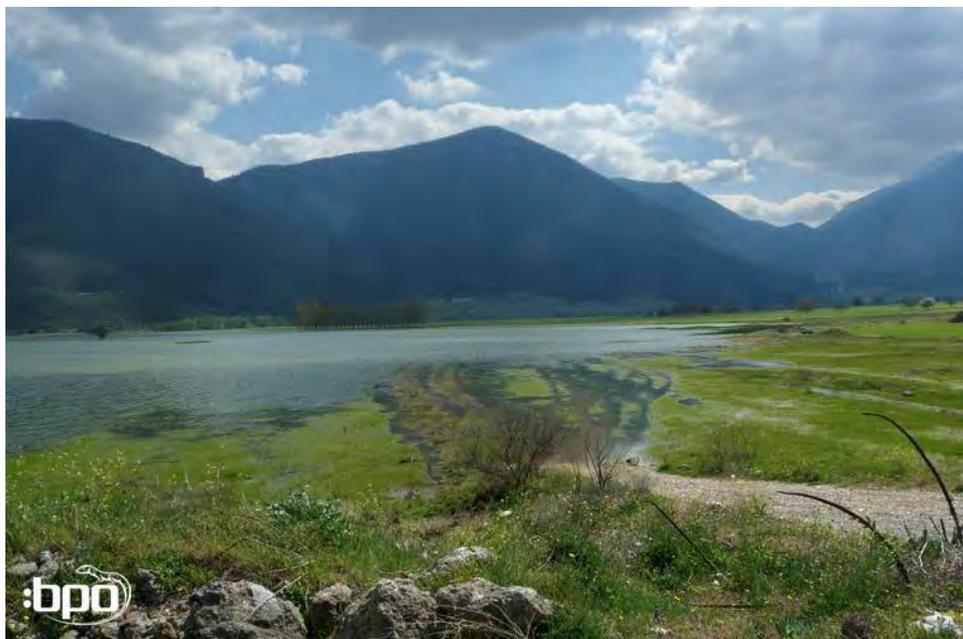
Natrix tessellata



Male *Hellenolacerta graeca*



Another *Hellenolacerta graeca*



Marsh areas at the Stymphalian Lake

Feneos

Inspired by the trip report at www.herpetofauna.at and the article of Mayer, Richter & Kammel we visited the Feneos basin in order to search for lizards. In the principal town Gkoura we stayed at a nice hotel, the neighbour village had a tavern opened everyday – so we were ready for herping adventures! We soon realized that the whole region has an impressive diversity of reptile species (seven Lacertid species!) in a high population density.



View over the Feneos basin



Podarcis peloponnesiacus with magnificent colours – like Podarcis tauricus, this species can be found in most kinds of habitats in the Feneos area



Algyroides moreoticus sleeping on a tree trunk



Another Podarcis-species: Podarcis erhardii livadiacus. The didn't find that species in the Parnon mountains but succeeded at Feneos.



A pair of *P. erhardii livadiacus*



Podarcis tauricus



And finally: *Podarcis muralis*. In the Feneos bassin there can be found four *Podarcis* species – this is really unique!



Ophrys reinholdii



The Doxa-Lake above Feneos



Lycaena ottomanus



Adult *Anguis cephalonicus*: The head resembles that of a hippo!



Cyrtopodion kotschy warming up in the morning sun



Habitat in the Feneos basin



Bufo viridis



A male Lacerta trilineata inspecting its territory...



...watching suspiciously the persons with the cameras...



...and, as obviously there is no threat, snuggling with its girlfriend



Hierophis gemonensis trying to cross the road: a dangerous situation – for the snake as well as for the photographer!

Remarks:

The areas of Feneos and Stymphalos have been some of the best places we have seen in Greece so far. In particular, we were very impressed by the high population density of the numerous reptile species. Thanks to Thomas Bader und Ilias Strachinis.

Literature:

MAYER W., K. RICHTER & W. KAMMEL (1990): Kartierung der Herpetofauna des Beckens von Feneos (Griechenland: Nordpeloponnes). *Herpetozoa* 2: 87 - 106.

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