



Aegean Islands, 28.05. - 13.06.2011

Five islands in two weeks: Kythira, Pori, Milos, Kimolos and Sifnos – our program for our herping trip in the Aegean Sea. The first week we spent together with Tekla Boersma, Gijs Damen, Jeroen Speybroeck, Jan van der Voort and Leonard Zammit; within the first days also Benny Trapp joined us. During the second week we were on our own. Due to hot temperatures herping was difficult sometimes – but, overall we are happy with the results of our trip and in particular, visiting different islands was great fun.



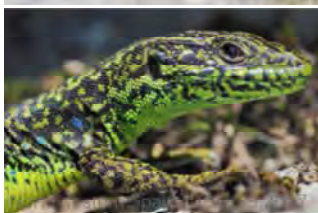
Where is the right place for entering the island? - Gijs, Benny, Jan and Jeroen in front of the Pori cliffs



Southeastern Spain, 10.2016
11.2017

Pori

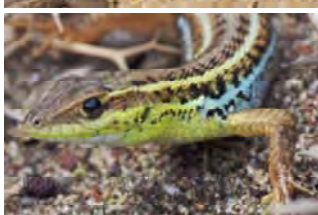
How to get to Pori? We planned to charter a boat on Kythira to bring us to the uninhabited island (thanks to Jeroen for organizing that!). Our target species was *Podarcis levendis*, which only occurs on Pori and the nearby islet Lagouvardos. Just at the first day after our arrival on Kythira we had the perfect occasion (sunny weather, no wind) for our trip – a speedboat brought us to Pori within less than one hour. There, we found *Podarcis levendis* in high population density – anyhow, the lizards were pretty nervous and difficult to photograph, in the afternoon they were hiding in the shadow.



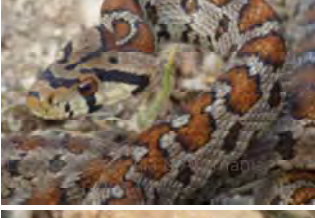
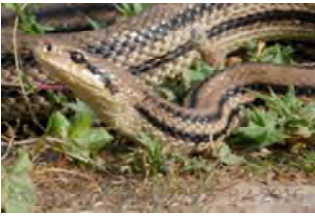
Jonian Islands, 25.5.-5.6.2017



21.4.2017



Podarcis levendis lives on Pori since millions of years but has been described not until 2008 and has been photographed only by a few people



The habitat of Podarcis levendis

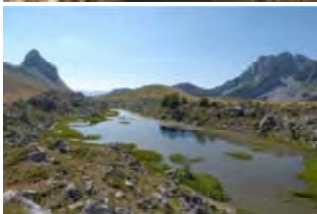
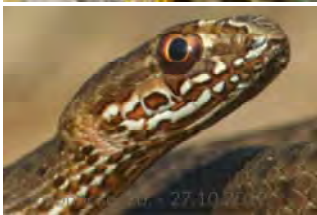


Podarcis levendis is a rather big wall lizard with inconspicuous coloration: brownish-greenish back, blue outer ventral scales and blue spots, underside white and orange



Archaic romance: a pair of P. levendis

Mallorca / Alifant



Andalucia, 10. - 18.03.2012



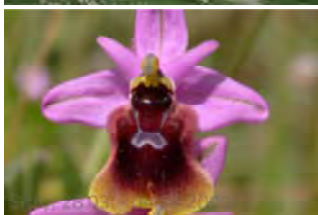
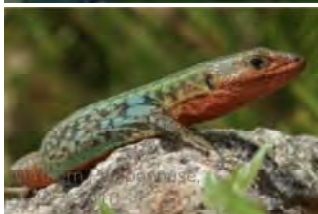
This guy is eating banana for the first time in his life...



...that tasted good! Like other reptiles Pori wall lizards like sweets: we also watched them licking on flowers



We made it! On our way back from Pori!



Kythira

Greece at its best: not much tourism, silence and lovely nature – that's Kythira! The island is situated a few kilometers south of Peloponnese and inhabited by species which also occur on the mainland: *Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*, *Bufo viridis*, *Mediodactylus kotschyi*, *Hemidactylus turcicus*, *Lacerta trilineata*, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, *Hierophis gemonensis*, *Natrix natrix* and *Telescopus fallax*. According to literature also *Ophiomorus punctatissimus*, *Typhlops vermicularis* and *Zamenis situla* occur on Kythira – but we didn't find those species. Furthermore, *Natrix tessellata* is also mentioned in literature but we have doubts if this species really lives on Kythira. Unfortunately, small lizards (like *Podarcis*) are missing on Kythira.



Kapsali bay



Mediodactylus kotschyi bibroni is omnipresent on the island



Ablepharus kitaibelii



Late orchids: *Orchis fragrans* and...



Ophrys ceto



The wild westcoast of Kythira



Beautiful Hierophis gemonensis – this species seems to be common on Kythira



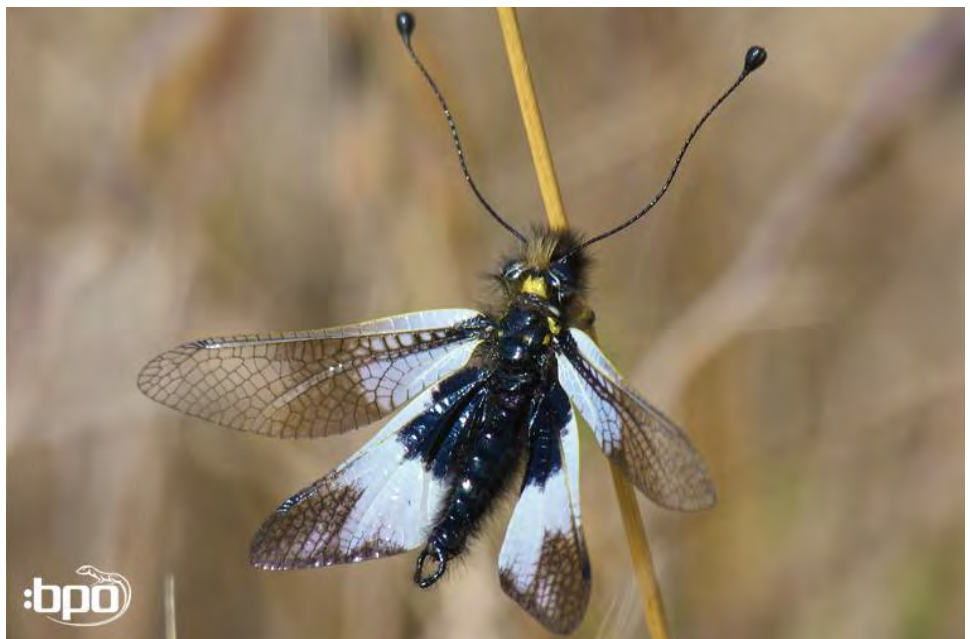
A subadult Hierophis gemonensis...



...and another one – in situ



Merops apiaster



Libelloides lacteus



Telescopus fallax in dynamic posture



Photo session with cat snake: Jan, Jeroen, Tekla und Gijs



Hemidactylus turcicus



Kythira has several brooks – habitat of *Natrix natrix*, finding that species took us some days



Platynemesis pennipes practicing their fertile choreography



Caliaeschna microstigma (Thanks to Jan!)



Posing like a big toad: juvenile Bufo viridis



Finally: our first subadult grass snake! The Kythira snakes didn't show the characteristic pale stripes of ssp. persa. Instead of that, they had interesting black blotches at their neck



An adult Matrix matrix...



...and another one



That was ugly: checking this potential *Natrix tessellata* habitat didn't bring success – brackish water with fishes and shrimps but no snakes. The occurrence of *Natrix tessellata* on Kythira seems to be very unlikely



The waterfall of Milopotamos: Near the brooks we saw numerous green lizards



Lacerta trilineata (nominated subspecies)...



...and another one



A tree full of geckoes (Mediodactylus kotschy)



Final group picture: Peter, Jeroen, Jan, Leonard, Gijs, Birgit, Tekla – we enjoyed our common trip.



Dusk in Kapsali

Milos

From Kythira we went (with one overnight stop in Athens) to Milos. During our stay the weather was hot and dry – beach weather! Anyhow, we found several species: *Pelophylax* sp., *Mauremys rivulata*, *Mediodactylus kotschyi*, *Hemidactylus turcicus*, *Podarcis milensis*, *Lacerta trilineata hansschweizeri*, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, *Zamenis situla* und *Natrix natrix schweizeri*. We didn't find *Telescopus fallax* and *Macrovipera schweizeri*. The landscape of Milos is rather unspectacular but there are some nice beaches. The major villages show the typical busy touristic scenery of the Cyclades.



Bath tub de luxe: Fyriplaka beach



Podarcis milensis – one of the most beautiful lizard species!



Black meets cyan



A pretty female of *Podarcis milensis*



Professional lizard photography?



It is just a photogenic species!



Another male



The north coast of Milos



Lacerta trilineata hansschweizeri on a dirt road



Another *Lacerta trilineata hansschweizeri* with characteristic pale coloration



Hemidactylus turcicus



Achivadolimni: besides of this brackish lake there are only a few wet places on the island – all brooks we saw had dried out



The water frogs on Milos (*Pelophylax* sp.) surprised us: huge specimen but very shy, escaping with athletic sprints



Mauremys rivulata in between aquatic plants



Lestes macrostigma



Palpares libelluloides



View over Milos bay to Plaka



One of the most beautiful European butterflies: Charaxes jasius



Alectoris chukar: Although still guided by their parents these chicks are already able to fly



Not until the end of our stay we found snakes: Zamenis situla (striped form)



Black beauty: Natrix natrix schweizeri

Kimolos

Kimolos looks similar to its neighboring island Milos – but it is less hectic than Milos. This quite agreeable island can easily be accessed by the boat from Milos. It has similar herpetofauna as Milos – we saw *Podarcis milensis*, *Mediodactylus kotschy* and *Lacerta trilineata*.



View over Kimolos



Mediodactylus kotschy – the Milos archipelago is home of subspecies *saronicus*



Birgit – hunting for lizards



Podarcis milensis with yellow pattern



Juvenile Lacerta trilineata



Athene noctua

Sifnos

The distance from Sifnos to Kimolos is only 12 km. Anyhow, on Sifnos *Podarcis milensis* is replaced by *Podarcis erhardii* in the nominate taxon. Hence we wanted to find out how these lizards look like during a day trip to the island. Sifnos is a nice island with impressive landscape. However, it has become rather touristic – with a lot of new buildings and busy traffic.



Too hot for everything: We went to Sifnos at the hottest day of our trip – it was even hard to photograph *Podarcis erhardii* and it took us hours to get an acceptable shot. *Lacerta trilineata hansschweizeri* disappeared – no picture of that.



Podarcis erhardii erhardii look like – guess! – Aegean wall lizards: they show brownish colors like this female, some males had slightly greenish colors



Sifnos has a separate subspecies of Mediodactylus kotschy called buchholzi – for us, all kotschy species look the same



Arrival of the ferry to bring us back to Milos



At the end of our trip we took the ferry from Milos via Sifnos...



...and Serifos...



...to Piraeus



We would appreciate that! (Giant advertisement at a building in Piraeus)

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