

A PROPOSAL FOR CONSERVATION OF INSULAR POPULATIONS OF LACERTID LIZARDS

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Insular lacertid lizards have populations of a high scientific and conservation interest. Throughout the XX century they were a fruitful source of research, still far from the end of their possibilities.

Regarding the two endemic species of Balearic islands, *Podarcis lilfordi* inhabits exclusively at coastal islets, while *P. pityusensis* lives at Ibiza, Formentera, Pityusic islets and some localities where it was introduced.

From the conservation viewpoint, several populations are endangered in variable degrees, even if only three cases of extinctions of natural populations are presently known: the subspecies *P. lilfordi rodriguezi*, *P. lilfordi carbonerae* and the population of "dels Frares" island. The first island was destroyed and the third connected to Mallorca island leading to the extinction. The location of *P. lilfordi carbonerae* is unknown. We present identified and potential threat factors and their evolution during the last twenty years, according to author's own experience and available bibliography. The invalidity of UICN criteria is demonstrated, as not applicable in an insular context. Alternative criteria are proposed.

Some cases of both species in which translocations have been done, leading to viable populations, are presented. In the coast of all Balearic islands islets without lizard populations are present:

<i>Podarcis lilfordi</i>			
Mallorca		Menorca	
Islets with <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets without <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets with <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets without <i>Podarcis</i>
25	14	14	6

<i>Podarcis pityusensis</i>			
Ibiza		Formentera	
Islets with <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets without <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets with <i>Podarcis</i>	Islets without <i>Podarcis</i>
29	7	5	4

Not all islets without lizards have appropriate ecological conditions to maintain a viable population with a conservation interest.

We establish the viability of a conservation project based in the introduction, under controlled conditions, of individuals of the most endangered subspecies in islets without lizards. The conditions in which the project should be launched are discussed, taking into account IUCN guidelines for the translocation of organisms as well as the genetical and priority criteria to be considered. Due to the limited number of unoccupied islets, only a short group of populations could take advantage of this conservation action.