

Potential cannibalism and intraspecific tail autotomization in the Aegean wall lizard,

Podarcis erhardii

Potencijalni kanibalizam i unutarvrstna autotomija repa kod makedonske gušterice,

Podarcis erhardii

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Podarcis erhardii (Bedrigo, 1876) is a lacertid lizard endemic to the Balkans, ranging from southern Bulgaria, southern Serbia, the FYR of Macedonia, Albania and much of the Greek mainland. Additionally, it is found throughout the Aegean Islands (Cyclades, Sporades and Dodecanese Islands) and islets (Valakos et al. 2008).

On 30 May 2014 at 11:09 h in the village of Halki (286 m a.s.l. 37°3'N, 25°29'E; Naxos, Cyclades, Greece), on a traditionally built dry stone wall bordering an agricultural field, we observed an adult male *P. erhardii* chase another smaller *P. erhardii* (presumed rival male) and then bite the smaller individual's tail until it was fully autotomized. Immediately after, the aggressive male fled into the brush with the autotomized tail in its mouth (Fig. 1). We believe this unique behaviour may be attributed from there latively high density of *P. erhardii* in this landscape. Although *P. erhardii* is a generalist insectivore (Valakos 1986), this recorded behavior underlines intraspecific competition and potential cannibalism.

Despite the abundance of intraspecific competition in *Podarcis* species, no study to our knowledge has recorded *Podarcis erhardii* capable of intraspecific caudal autonomy.

REFERENCES

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Figure 1. Adult male *P. erhardii* biting and autotomizing a suspected rival male of the same species (Halki village, Naxos, Greece.) Photo by Hayden Hedman.

Slika 1. Odrasli mužijak *P. erhardii* koji je ugrizao i odgrizao rep suparničkog mužijaka iste vrste (Halki village, Naxos, Greece.). Fotografirao Hayden Hedman.