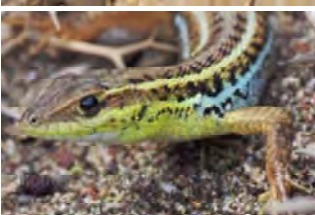
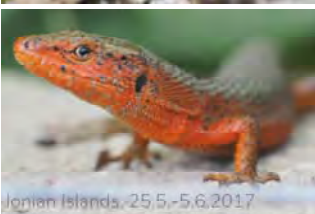
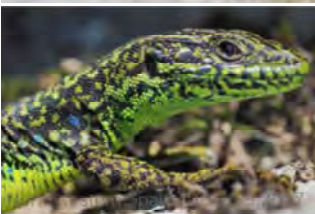


home trip reports lizards about links



Romania, 24.05. - 03.06.2013

Bun venit - These are our Romanian adventures: Ten days travelling through this magnificent country with its Asian, Central and Southern European influenced flora & fauna. We saw wide landscapes, narrow gorges, high mountains and met warm and friendly people. This country is a great destination! Our main stations were the Black Sea coast and South-Western Romania. The result of our trip: four new species and four new subspecies. Many thanks to Cosmin Mancu, Gabriela Insuratelu, Adorian Ardelean, Corina Ardelean, Vlad Cioflec and Jan van der Voort.



Dobruja colors: *Consolida orientalis*

24.05.

Arrival in Bucharest. From there, we directly went to the Black Sea coast near Constanta, where we arrived in the evening.

25.05.

We went to Vadu beach to meet Cosmin Mancu (a biologist from Iasi) and his wife Gabriela. On the way, a stopover brought the first species on our wishlist: *Lacerta trilineata dobrogensis*. In the swampy coast at Vadu we found *Natrix natrix*, *Emys orbicularis*, *Testudo graeca* and *Podarcis tauricus*. But, of course we headed for *Eremias arguta* and with Cosmin, the right places were easily found. After an extensive photo session with *Eremias* we drove to Babadag, a species-rich reserve. There, we found *Podarcis tauricus*, *Lacerta viridis*, *Testudo graeca* and *Ablepharus kitaibelii*.



An early hit: *Lacerta trilineata dobrogica*



Pyrenees, 2008 - 2016



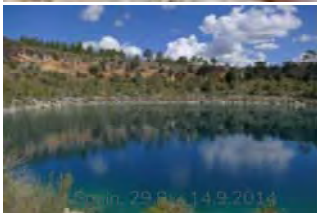
Sicily & Aeolian islands
6.6.2016



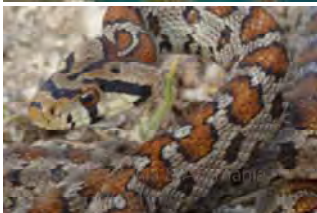
Spain, 2015 - 1.9.2015



Spain, 2015 - 11.7.2015



Spain, 29.8. - 14.9.2014



Mallorca / ...



Birgit & Gabriela relaxing on the beach...



... while Peter & Cosmin are chasing lizards.



Eremias arguta - the most important species of our trip: it can be found in Europe only in Romania and neighboring CIS countries.



Pair of Eremias arguta



Orchis palustris



Coastal plain at Vadu



Aegean Islands, 28.05. - 13.06.2011



Kastellon, 01.07.2011



Alpi, 09.09. - 03.10.2010



Alps, 03. - 17.07.2010



Alpi, 09.09.2010



Spain, November 2008 / 2009



Ablepharus kitaibelii stepaneki



Podarcis tauricus tauricus



Iris variegata



Limodorum abortivum



Lacerta viridis - the specimen in this area often occur in the "meridionalis" color morph.

26.05.

We wanted more shots of *Eremias arguta*, and therefore went to Vadu, again. The beach was full of of these lizards. Afterwards, we moved to Histria - the ancient ruins were inhabited by *Podarcis tauricus* and the water was populated by *Natrix tessellata* and *Natrix natrix*. Unfortunately, we didn't manage to get good shots of *Lacerta agilis chersonensis* - actually, this subspecies of the sand lizard should be our only failure (Cosmin couldn't understand why we made such a fuss about such a common species :-). At Histria, we also had to learn that a full-grown *Dolichophis caspius* is very, very big - much too big for us! Therefore, we hoped to find a smaller one later... After lunch at Histria we were cruising around, but didn't find anything new.



Eremias arguta in its full glory



Baby crocodile...



Eremias arguta shows an amazing behavior: The flight distance is about 3 meters, and if the animals start to run, they run over long distances, often 20 meters...



...but sometimes, they don't flee at all but just stay...



...and look curiously at the camera



Pregnant female



Our only documentation of *Lacerta agilis chersonensis*



Two color morphs of *Natrix tessellata*: patterned...



...and uniform



Natrix natrix



Lunch at Histria



Bradyporus dasyopus



Podarcis tauricus

27.05.

Cosmin showed us an area near Mangalia with a Vipera ammodytes habitat, but we had no luck. Anyhow, this time we came across a juvenile Dolichophis caspius (not too big for us!). Also in this area: Emys orbicularis, Testudo graeca and lots of Lacerta viridis. That day we had to say goodbye to Gabriela who had to go back home, and Cosmin who had to work the next day.



Juvenile Dolichophis caspius - not really impressive, admittedly, but a new species for us.



Cosmin admiring Peter's new bracelet.



Testudo graeca



Where are the Viperas?

28.05.

We wasted half a day with the unsuccessful search for *Lacerta agilis* - what a disgrace! Afterwards, we had another try for

Lacerta trilineata: a first habitat we knew from our literature proved to be a dump. So we followed a guess by Vlad Ciofleac and went to Gura Dobrogei. According to literature, there should only occur *Lacerta viridis*. But we found *Lacerta viridis* as well as *Lacerta trilineata* - so, Vlad had been right.



Male *Podarcis tauricus* (photographed by Birgit, of course...)



Spermophilus citellus



Steppe



Lost in Dobruja...



Lacerta trilineata



Emys orbicularis



Greetings from Central Asia!

29.05.

We moved from the Black Sea to the Iron Gate in western Romania - an eight hours drive. In Orsova, the Danube breaks through the southern foothills of the Carpathian Mountains and thereby has created a fantastic landscape. After our arrival in Orsova we took an evening walk around the area and found *Testudo hermanni*, *Darevskia praticola*, *Lacerta viridis*, *Anguis colchica*, *Vipera ammodytes*. After the barren steppe of Dobruja, the area around Orsova seemed like a herpetological supermarket to us!



On the road...



Danube, with Serbia on its right shore



Testudo hermanni with passenger



Anguis colchica(?) - With this specimen we were not really satisfied, since it hardly differed from Anguis fragilis or Anguis graeca.



Darevskia praticola, also a new species for us.



Vipera ammodytes

30.05.

During the night it had rained - Salamandra weather! In fact, we found Salamandra in the nearby forest as well as some very shy meadow lizards. Afterwards, the area around the Vodita Monastery should prove to be very productive: Lacerta viridis, Podarcis muralis, Darevskia praticola, Natrix tessellata, Testudo hermanni, Ablepharus kitaibelii, Emys orbicularis, Bombina variegata.



Salamandra salamandra



Darevskia praticola - these animals are shy critters!



Isophya speciosa



Salvium sp.



Near Orsova, Lacerta viridis occurs in remarkable density.



Darevskia praticola, hidden in dry leaves



Close-up of *Emys orbicularis*



Digitalis lanata



"Golden" *Testudo hermanni*



Podarcis muralis...



and another one...



Bombina variegata

31.05.

We went to the Moldova Noua area to meet Corina and Adorian Ardelean, two biologists from Timisoara who explained us

a lot about plants and insects. In the Nera Gorge we searched for *Vipera ammodytes* - success! Then, Adorian showed us a place where he had found *Anguis colchica*. Our search was rewarded with a bold male. In that area, also *Lacerta agilis* and *Coronella austriaca* was found - a great day!



Dactylorhiza incarnata



Where are the Vipers? (Birgit, Adorian and Corina)



Here they are! (*Vipera ammodytes*, in situ)



and another one (a "Vipera in its habitat" picture :-)



Portrait



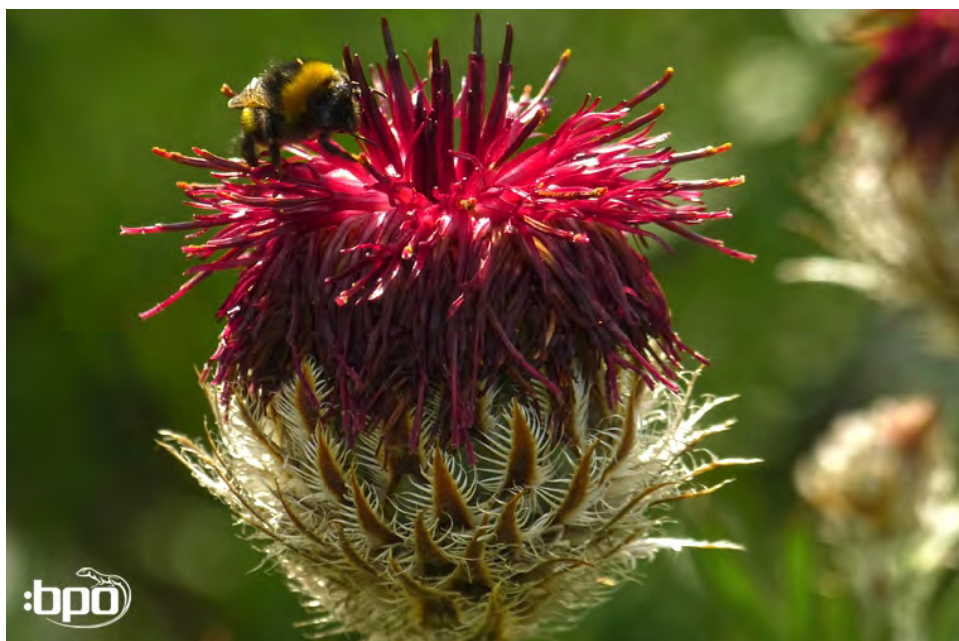
Vipera ammodytes



Peter, showing off with his Viper



Cordulegaster bidentata



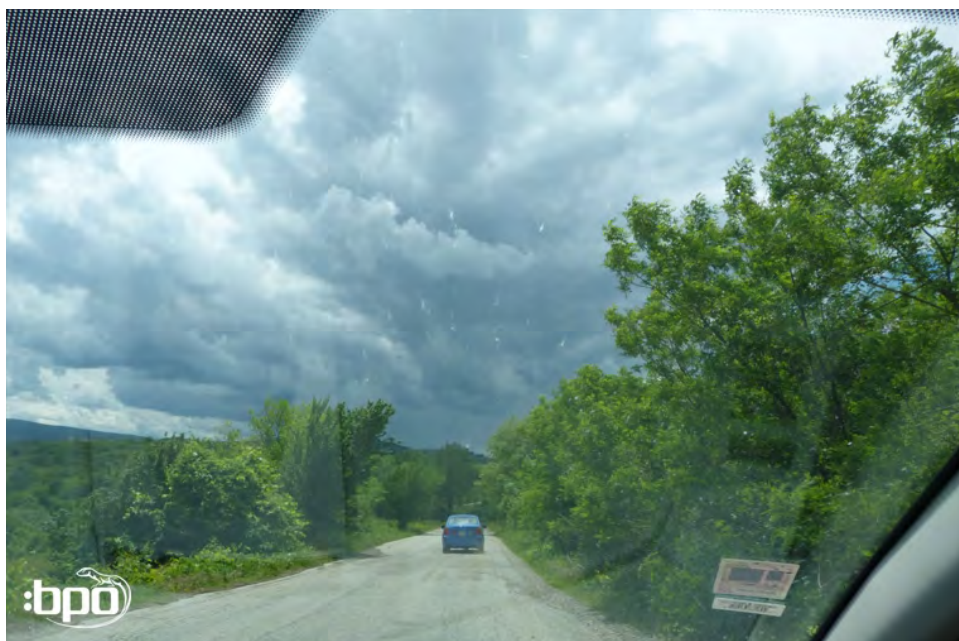
Centaurea atropurpurea



Lycaena alciphron



Lacerta viridis



Ride through dynamic weather



Our fourth new species: *Anguis colchica* - the males are massive and much bigger than *Anguis fragilis*, they almost resemble *Pseudopus apodus*



Hypnotized by *Anguis colchica*?



Finally: *Lacerta agilis* (Adorian couldn't understand why we made such a fuss about such a common species :-)



Verbascum phoeniceum



Birgit and Corina chatting about herbs & herps...



Decticus verrucivorus



Coronella austriaca



Dynamic weather again

01.06.

At rainy weather we started another search for Darevskia near Orsova; in the afternoon it rained constantly.



Dog country: Romania is populated by countless straying dogs



Darevskia praticola...



...and another one



Melitaea arduinna



Libelloides macaronius



Orsova

02.06.

We drove along the southern slopes of the Carpathians towards Bucharest. On our way we saw some sand lizards. Unfortunately, a side trip to a Zootoca habitat on the "Transalpina" road was spoiled by a heavy thunderstorm. After our arrival in Bucharest, we explored the vital downtown bar scene and the following day we had to go back to Germany.



Lacerta agilis: the animals on the southern slopes of the Carpathians show more or less "argus" pattern



Digitalis grandiflora



On the "Transalpina" road



Bucharest: la revedere, Romania!

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