

A seven-years' monitoring of an isolated population of the lizard *Acanthodactylus erythrurus* in NE Iberia

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“Els Muntanyans” is a coastal protected area near Torredembarra (NE Iberia) which includes a narrow stripe of natural dunes and marshes. This minute space (35 ha) harbours an isolate of the thermophilous lacertid *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*, outlying the north-westernmost border of its range. The extreme vulnerability of both the area and the species advised for the development of a monitoring plan for: 1) determining the natural fluctuations of the population, 2) detecting and/or anticipating tendencies recording the variables associated with them and 3) orienting and evaluating corrective measures.

Since 2000, teams of volunteers have been trained to perform normalised transects scanning the whole area. Species (*Psammodromus algirus* and *Podarcis (hispanica) liolepis* are also found), size class (adult/immature), habitat type and sampling sector were recorded. Transects were carried out before (April-June) and after (September-October) summer draught controlling for meteorological conditions.

The results of seven years of monitoring (2000-2006) indicate stability of the (adult) population and annual variation in recruitment. The distribution is, nevertheless, heterogeneous by habitats and sector. *A. erythrurus* mainly uses the fixed dunes and dune backs and is rarely observed on the artificial substrates where *P. hispanica** is the most frequent. Some buildings in the middle of the area, as well as the wooden walking passes lying on the sand, caused habitat disturbance and microfragmentation. Based on the monitoring results, the removal of some wooden passes proved to be a successful measure for increasing local connectivity. Future perspectives, including other management measures and general applications of this methodology, are discussed.

