

Distribution, Stocks and Ecology of the common lizard in Nordrhein-Westfalen

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This talk is based on 2947 observations of common lizards in 871 out of 1558 (55,9%) squares of ordnance map in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Concerning all mapping periods, information on the common lizard is available for about half of the area of this federal state. But during the recent mapping period 1992 to 2004, there have been observations in only 553 squares (35,5%). There were no area-wide but nevertheless representative mapping activities during this period.

Including all observations from all mapping periods, the common lizard is present nearly area-wide especially in all of the hilly and mostly forested Regions of the Eifel, the "Bergisches Land", the "Südwestfälisches Bergland" and the "Weserbergland". In contrast, there is a disconnected and loose distribution in the lowlands. This regions without any recent observations might be results of shortcomings in mapping or represent real distribution gaps. But even in the lowlands there are areas which are continuously colonised by the common lizard. These Situation is found especially in the western "Münsterland" (in connectivity with the northern „Niederrheinisches Tiefland“ and the central „Emscherland“), in der "Plantlünner Sandebene" in the central "Münsterland" and in the "Senne".

The common lizard inhabits an extremely wide range of habitats, covering wet grassland, and bogs as well as very dry sandy heathlands, chalcereous semi dry grassland and quarries. To generalize, a typical habitat of the common lizard shows the following characters: Semi open but richly covered landscape with a mosaic of procumbent herbal vegetation. Grasses interspersed with bushes, group of bushes or wood edges provide a close vicinity of sunny and shady places. Small habitat structures like stumps or logs of trees, heaps of limbs, sticks or dry leaves, stones and subsurface holes are essential. They are used as basking sites, dens for retreat by day or by night or as hibernacula. Many habitats of the common lizard explain a high soil humidity.

Activity period of the common lizard in Nordrhein-Westfalen ranges from beginning of march until end of October. This eight month period is likely to be shortend to about seven months in higher altitudes. Hibernation lasts four to five months.

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