

A. Zagar, N. Osojnik, A. Vrezec & M.A. Carretero

## **Does presence of con- or hetero-specific male influence preferred body temperatures of two sympatric lacertids? The case of *Podarcis muralis* and *Iberolacerta horvathi***

Species interactions are complex processes derived from a combination of organisms' physiological predispositions and their behavioural and ecological traits combined with their spatial and temporal distribution. Understanding interspecific interactions between two lacertid species should include a multi-level approach. The focus of individual studies should interfere with each other, but the first step should be done separately. *Podarcis muralis* and *Iberolacerta horvathi* are sympatric in almost whole range of *I. horvathi*'s distribution (endemic to Southern Alps in NE Italy, S Austria and NW Slovenia and Dinaric Mountains in Slovenia and Croatia) and display overall similarity in morphometric, coloration and ecological characteristics. *I. horvathi* is more abundant at higher altitudes whereas *P. muralis* shows the opposite trend, suggesting competitive exclusion pattern. One way to understand biological processes of lacertid species on a mechanistic level is to perform experiments investigating preferred body temperatures (Tp), since the use of best basking sites could be source of competition in ectothermic reptiles. For two consecutive years we performed a comparative analysis of Tp with experiments in laboratory thermo gradients (20 -50°C; measurements at 11 hourly intervals) with specimens of both sympatric species to compare interspecific variation. *I. horvathi* selected higher Tps than *P. muralis* but mainly in spring and in the afternoon, in summer and early morning being more similar. *P. muralis* had a broader range of Tp than *I. horvathi*, suggesting it to be more eurythermic. Secondly, we investigated if the presence of conspecific or heterospecific male influences the males' Tp of both species to find out if inference interactions influence Tp. Preliminary results show that the influence of presence of con- or hetero-specific males on Tp was only evident in *I. horvathi*, but not in *P. muralis*.

S.R. Zamfirescu, A. Strugariu, O. Zamfirescu, I. Gherghel & T.C. Sahlean

## **Activity pattern and microhabitat selection in *Vipera ursinii* from two different eastern Romanian ecosystems**

Habitat loss and direct persecution by humans are the main threats for snakes, especially venomous. *Vipera ursinii* is considered the most endangered European viper and in eastern Romania (*Vipera ursinii moldavica*) it persists through very few inland (steppic) and deltaic populations. The ecology of this subspecies is relatively poorly known. Our study aims to compare the activity pattern and microhabitat selection depending on age, sex, and female reproductive status, in steppic and deltaic meadow viper populations, data that can be used for adjusting possible conservation efforts. The study areas lie in steppe patches of continental region of the north-east of Romanian Moldavia and in the Danube-Delta, near the Black Sea coast. The steppic habitats are hill-slopes with small bluffs across, covered mostly by xerophilous grasses, whereas the deltaic one lies on the southern part of a levee and consists of a mosaic of small sandy plateaus, channels and depressions covered with psamophilous and