

**PODARCIS MURALIS (Common Wall Lizard). SAUROPHAGY.**

*Podarcis muralis maculiventris* (Southern Alps lineage) is a medium-sized European lizard from northwest Italy, southern Switzerland, parts of Austria and one location in extreme southern Germany. It has also been introduced in Cincinnati, Ohio with satellite colonies in Kentucky and Indiana. *Lacerta b. bilineata*

(Western Green Lizard) is a large-sized European lizard that has been introduced in Topeka, Kansas (Burke and Deichsel 2008. *In* Mitchell et al. [eds.], *Urban Herpetology*, pp.347-353. SSAR Herpetol. Conserv., Salt Lake City, Utah). The natural European range of *L. bilineata* is completely overlapped by *P. muralis*. Here we report on a Common Wall Lizard predating a Western Green Lizard in their natural range.

On 24 August, 2011, MA observed an adult Common Wall Lizard seizing and killing a young Western Green Lizard near the village of Carena in the Morobbia valley, Switzerland, canton of Ticino (46.1777778°N, 9.0977778°E, 967 m elev.) (Fig. 1). The prey individual was approximately two-thirds of the predator's size, a remarkably large prey item. The wall lizard dragged its prey into a wall joint where it could no longer be observed. The only explanation we can offer is that the wall lizard did so in order to eat it, or perhaps parts of it (e.g., the tail). To our knowledge, this is the first documented case of *P. muralis* predating a *L. bilineata*.

*Podarcis siculus*, a species closely related to *P. muralis*, was reported to be saurophagic; Capula and Aloise (2011. *Acta Herpetol.* 6:11–14) documented two cases of *P. siculus* preying on small geckos (*Hemidactylus turcicus*). Grano et al. (2011. *Biodiv. J.* 2:151–152) and Burke and Mercurio (2002. *Amer. Mid. Nat.* 147:368–375) each documented an adult *P. siculus campestris* eating young of its own species.



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FIG. 1. *Podarcis muralis* preying on a *Lacerta bilineata*.

We conclude that the saurophagic feeding behavior of these *Podarcis* species should raise concern about possible negative impacts on native lizard species where they are introduced. For instance, Deichsel and Walker (2010. Herpetol. Rev. 36:228–229) reported that introduced *P. muralis maculiventris* (Southern Alps lineage) were replacing *Plestiodon fasciatus* from a habitat in Indiana, and the return of the latter after removal of the introduced species.

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