

Threats and conservation of the common lizard what can we do for this species?

DIETER GLANDT, Ochtrup

The Common Lizard is not listed in the EU habitats directive and is not endangered according to the Red List of Germany. So it could be concluded that the species should not be looked at by nature conservation. But things are different when the level of the 16 federal states in Germany is concerned. Only in 9 states the species is taken as not endangered while three states take it as endangered, three other list it as "vulnerable" and one state take it as "near threatened". So it seems reasonable to prevent further deterioration.

Natural processes which cause at least local decline of common lizard populations are mostly successions to more forestlike vegetation. The main anthropogenic factors are peat digging in the remaining bogs, a forest management with only economical purposes and the loss of linear landscape elements in the open countryside like hedges which formerly were migration routes. Also the loss of many small structures like rotten tree trunks, small cliffs or heath rows is important.

Most important for the conservation of the common lizard is a more natural forest management. This means the increase of mixed forest and deciduous forests where small clearings or storminduced openings can exist. But also the construction of broad forest edges and of open areas along forest roads together should be part of such management which also may create mounds of rotten wood or stones and similar small structures at such open places.

Management of old gravel pits or quarries as open landscape elements will be important. In general all conservation management should contribute to a biotope network because it is not enough to conserve local populations only but gene flow between local populations must be ensured. Therefore linear structures are of special importance which requires the conservation of hedges, old walls of field stones, road and railway verges. These structures must be managed according to the requirements of the fauna.

Restoration measures in bogs should also take care of the lizards as well as other reptile species like smooth snake and adder, which needs suitable habitat areas at least in the periphery of the wet central bog area.

DIETER GLANDT

Akazienstraße 54 a, D-48607 Ochtrup, e-mail: dub.glandt@t-online.de