

Field Report, July 08th to August 22nd 2010 - France, Spain, Portugal

by Frank Deschandol

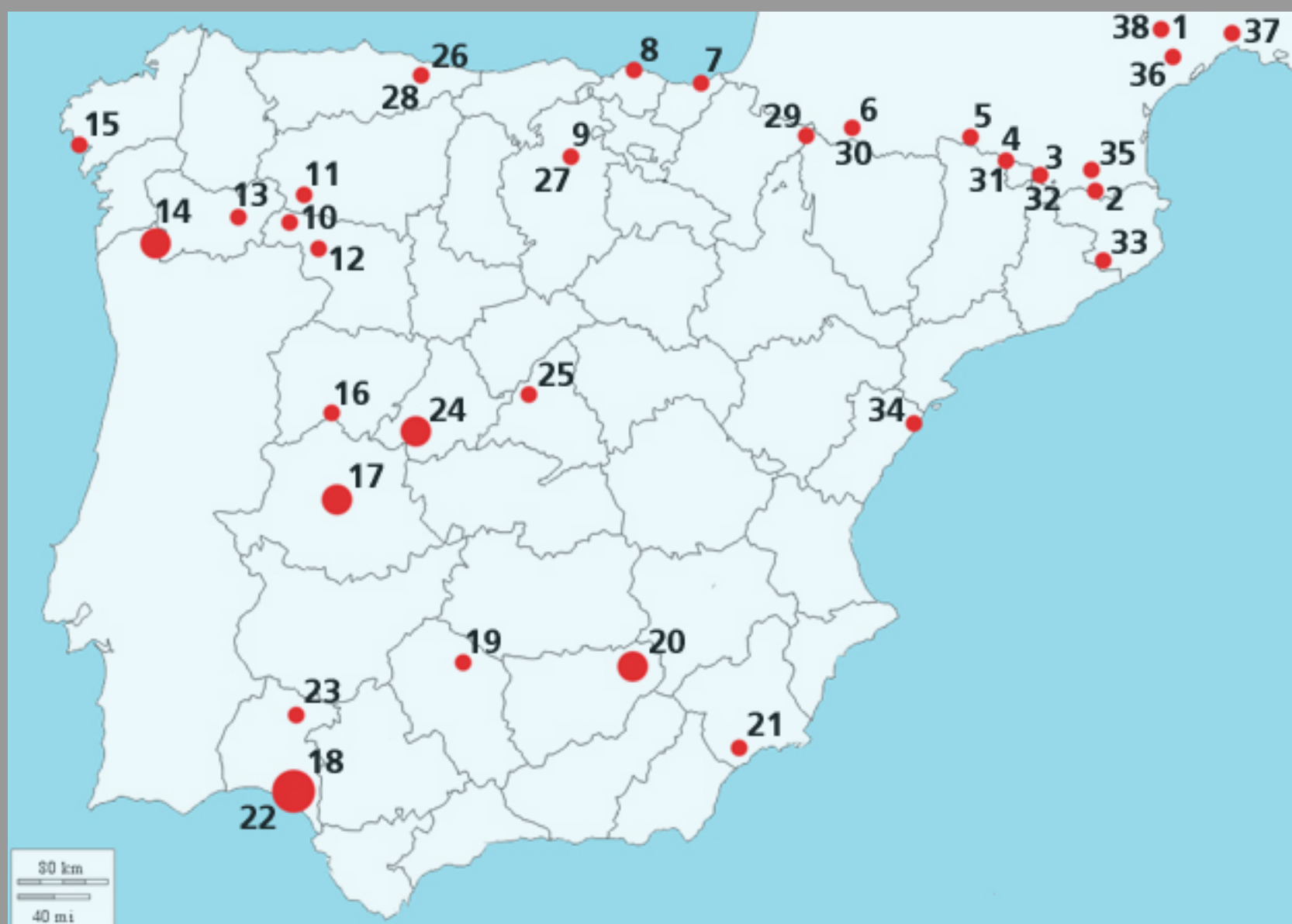


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For this new trip, I traveled a first part with my friend Philippe and his wife Catherine, with two different cars. The goal of the trip was to photograph all species and subspecies missed during my last prospecting (or to complete insufficient pictures) and we didn't waste much time for the other ones already well knows. We especially concentrated our application on Iberolacerta spp., however we were very lucky about snakes, always difficult to find by the hot season.

Synopsis :

13.892 km - 8103 pictures (= 213 Go) - 2 blowouts - and some kg lost !



(1) France :

We started our research near Millau to find *Podarcis liolepis cebennensis*. Two small were found... Other species : *Bufo spinosus*, *Podarcis muralis* and *Lacerta bilineata*.



Podarcis liolepis cebennensis





Lacerta bilineata

(2) France :

Near Prats-de-Mollo, we were seeking *Belisarius xambeui*, a blind endemic scorpion. Not really easy, but with perseverance, we did find one specimen. We also saw there *Salamandra salamandra terrestris*, *Podarcis muralis* KOR (better say Kill On Road) and *Malpolon monspessulanus* KOR.



the very rare *Belisarius xambeui*. Notice the lack of eyes...



Salamandra salamandra terrestris



Callimorpha dominula



Chrysocarabus rutilans

(3) France :

In a nice landscape, we looked for *Lacerta agilis garzoni* and *Vipera aspis zinnikeri*. Lacerta was easily

found in the morning ; very discreet though... No snake here, so we decided to reach a very near place, probably better for aspis. However, the weather became very bad. I only spotted a nice male in a small wall between two rainstorms, but I hadn't my gloves on me. Fortunately, the next day in a sunny morning, I caught several snakes. Other species : *Podarcis muralis*, *Anguis fragilis*, *Rana temporaria*.



Philippe photographing...



... the beautiful sky



Lacerta agilis garzoni, male



other



female



young



Podarcis muralis



Vipera aspis zinnikeri



other



young



other



Cat trying to recognize some flowers...

(4) France :

Once again looking for *Iberolacerta aurelioi* (was there in September 2009). And once again, we failed to find some. But I learnt later that we weren't at the right location...! Other species : *Zootoca vivipara louistlanzi*, *Rana temporaria*.



stream near the site

(5) France :

Better luck with *Iberolacerta aranica*, after a hearty walk, we quickly found a lot of lizards even by a hot time. Other species : *Zootoca vivipara louistlanzi*, *Alytes obstetricans* (indeterminate subspecies between *obstetricans* and *almogavarii*), *Bufo spinosus*, *Rana temporaria* and a *Salamandra salamandra terrestris* (probably).



up up up...



... to find *Iberolacerta aranica*



same



other



other



other



Zootoca vivipara louislantzi, young



Bufo spinosus



Alytes obstetricans



Salamandra salamandra terrestris

(6) France :

It takes some hours before we could see the first *Iberolacerta bonnali*. A long hike in the mountain gave

no result except a *Podarcis muralis*. Later in the afternoon, we finally saw 3 lizards next to the parking. Nearby, we found a nest of *Tichodroma muraria*. The day after, we met Matthieu Berronneau and Maud, for a nice day, trying to find any melanistic *Natrix natrix*. But only *Lacerta bilineata*, *Podarcis muralis*, *Zootoca vivipara louistlanzi*, *Anguis fragilis*, *Natrix maura* and *Rana temporaria* could be seen.



Iberolacerta bonnali



same



Chrysocarabus splendens



Oreina sp.



Gnorimus nobilis



Hoplia caerulea



Maud & Matthieu at work...



Lacerta bilineata



young



équipe de choc... © Maud Menay



Tichodroma muraria

(7) Spain :

A short visit at Donostia-S. Sebastian to see *Podarcis liolepis sebastiani* that we missed in France, on the way, the day before. There, in a touristy place, they are very abundant but very shy.





same



other



other

(8) Spain :

The same day, we reach a spot at *Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis*. By a bad weather, we could only see a few lizards.





other



site, crazy stairs...

In the evening, we were near Burgos, where I failed to find *Vipera latastei* last year. In the last sunlight, I lifted up a lot of stones and saw a very nice pinkish *V. latastei*. Unfortunately, the snake could escape into a hole. After a while, unable to find it, I kept on my bulldozer job and ten meters further, I caught another one very similar under a stone. Thinking about, I'm sure now it was probably the same snake. Other species : *Timon lepidus lepidus*. In the night, only Philippe saw briefly one *Hyla molleri*. No luck. Only some *Bufo calamita* were seen on the path.
The next morning, very nice weather, but no *Vipera*...



Vipera latastei latastei



same



same



Timon lepidus lepidus, male



subadult



young

(10) Spain :

In a known area, we saw x3 *Iberolacerta galani*, one adult and two youngs. Very difficult to see by a warm day, whole animals were hidden. Under a big stone, we discovered some eggs, surely of that species. Other species : *Anguis fragilis*, *Timon lepidus ibericus*, *Pelophylax perezi*.



Iberolacerta galani



young



eggs

(11) Spain :

Another attempt in a different place for *Iberolacerta galani*. Only a few juveniles/subadults were found under the stones.





subadult

(12) Spain :

We slept near Cional where some *Alytes obstetricans boscai* were calling in the night... Other species : *Timon lepidus*, *Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus*, *Podarcis bocagei*.



Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus



Alytes obstetricans boscai

(13) Spain :

At Cabeza Grande de Manzaneda, total failure, no *Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica*. I saw only two

Podarcis bocagei.



beautiful landscape, but no Ibero here...



Podarcis bocagei



Platycnemis acutipennis, male



Cat at camp site

(14) Portugal :

In Peneda-Geres, we met Peter Brakels in the night, just in time to admire some *Chioglossa lusitanica longipes*. The next day, we reached a spot for *Vipera seoanei cantabrica*. Only one was found, a gravid female, along with *Podarcis bocagei*, *Chalcides striatus*, *Timon lepidus ibericus*, *Psammodromus algirus*... A great morning. Other species : *Anguis fragilis*, *Lacerta schreiberi*, *Rana iberica*, *Coronella girondica*.



Chioglossa lusitanica longipes



Podarcis bocagei



other



Chalcides striatus



other



Psammodromus algirus



Coronella girondica



Vipera seoanei cantabrica



same



Peter and I... just awake... but ready

(15) Spain :

While Philippe & Cat took quietly the road to Peña de Francia, I drove alone north-west on the coast,

hoping to find *Chalcides bedriagae pistaciae*. In the late afternoon, I found about x12 of the latter and about x10 *Chalcides striatus*, adults, gravid females and also very youngs. And under the same rock, x2 *Coronella girondica* ! Other species : *Timon lepidus ibericus*, *Podarcis bocagei* and *Anguis fragilis*.



Chalcides bedriagae pistaciae, notice the subtle greenish 'pistachio' reflection



other



other



other



other



a very beautiful *Chalcides striatus*



juvenile



Coronella girondica



other



same



Podarcis bocagei

(16) Spain :

At Peña de Francia, we spent the entire day to seek the famous *Iberolacerta martinezricai*. But in the morning, in the afternoon or even in the evening after so many kilometres in the rocks : sterile, no lizard... I'm still wondering whether that species isn't a joke ! T° were about 10°c in the night and 20°c by day, sunny with a little wind. Other species : *Lacerta schreiberi*.



the only one *Iberolacerta martinezricai*... like a shadow...



Capra pyrenaica ..

(17) Spain :

Further south, on the way to Monfragüe, we saw *Natrix maura*, *Mauremys leprosa*, *Pelophylax perezi*. At

Monfragüe : *Mauremys leprosa*, *Psammmodromus algirus*, *Tarentola mauritanica*, x2 *Pleurodeles waltl*, *Bufo spinosus*, a single *Triturus pygmaeus* and *Alytes cisternasii* tadpoles. On Embalse de Navalcan, some *Podarcis guadarramae guadarramae*, *Natrix maura* and *Tarentola mauritanica*.



Triturus pygmaeus



Tarentola mauritanica



Pleurodeles waltl



Mauremys leprosa, young



Ischnura graellsii



Argiope lobata



Charaxes jasius



Caprimulgus ruficollis



Podarcis guadarramae guadarramae



young



Embalse de Navalcan



no problem, go !

(18) Spain :

In Doñana, with about 38°C, our hope was low... Nevertheless we found : *Rana meridionalis*, *Bufo calamita*, *Rana perezi*, some big *Timon lepidus lepidus* (in cavities of trees), *Psammodromus algirus*, a young *Podarcis vaucheri* in El Rocio, *Natrix maura*, *Tarentola mauritanica* and a very beautiful *Hemorrhois hippocrepis* high in a tree. Philippe and Cat saw another one smaller the next night, also inside an old cork oak.

Driving by night, we both avoided miraculously a large *Rhinechis scalaris* on the road. Taking refuge in a big rabbit hole, it was impossible to catch. But five minutes later, another one smaller, immobile on the road. The next night, at the exact place where we saw the big snake, again another unfortunately KOR. In the morning, trails in the sand betrayed the coming of *Lynx pardina* next to our cars...

Near Mazagon, we could see a nice *Chamaeleo chamaeleon*. I slept alone in a known place, trying to find any *Podarcis carbonelli* in the morning. Only a few were out, but sufficient to make at least some good pictures of that species. In a bush, I heard some strange noises and saw suddenly looming up two mongooses (*Herpestes ichneumon*) on the woodpath. Other species : *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*, *Psammodromus algirus*.



Timon lepidus lepidus



same



other, biggest



Rhinechis scalaris



a precious help for a rowdy snake



Hemorrhois hippocrepis



same



nice pink pearly belly



Chamaeleo chamaeleon



Podarcis carbonelli



other



same



Pelophylax perezii



Hyla meridionalis



Prinobius scutellaris



Scarites cyclops eating a *Scarabaeus sacer*



Doñana playa

(19) Spain :

On a spot for *Emys orbicularis fritzjuergenobsti*, all was very dry. In or next to a few remaining ponds, we saw a lot of young *Hyles meridionalis*, x3 big *Mauremys leprosa* and only one *Emys* in the larger pond... uncatchable. Other species : *Lissotriton boscai* (larvae only).



Mauremys leprosa



Ameles spallanziana, green male

(20) Spain :

In Sierra de Cazorla, *Algyroides marchi* was our main target. The first lizard was quickly found, and after

further research, several were seen and photographed. Other species : *Bufo spinosus*, *Pelophylax perezi*, *Podarcis virescens*, *Natrix maura*.

It was time to say "goodbye" to Phil & Cat, going back to France. I met with great pleasure Luis Garcia Cardenete the same day, and we made a short walk on an *Alytes dickhilleni* spot. Only tadpoles were found. Then, I went alone to Sierra de Almenara.



Algyroides marchi



other



other



Polyphylla fullo, female



Platycnemis latipes



dark pattern of *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*



Onychogomphus uncatus



Luis checking for *Alytes dickhilleni* tadpoles

(21) Spain :

Near Lorca, I was seeking - once again - *Testudo graeca graeca* and *Timon nevadensis*. Very warm there, and I couldn't see any *Testudo* nor *Timon*... Only *Acanthodactylus erythrurus*, *Podarcis hispanica*, a first *Malpolon monspessulanus* (too fast), and another one trapped in an old swimming pool with a dead dog.



Podarcis hispanica



same



other



Malpolon monspessulanus found...



... under the blue bag



Buthus occitanus



Polistes sp.



Cicada orni, male and female



unlucky one



Cicadoidea sp.



The rare mushroom *Battaraea phalloides*

(22) Spain :

Back to Doñana where I took 2 days "off", sleeping on a very nice desert beach. Later, at Matalascañas, I caught a *Malpolon monspessulanus*. In the night, at the same camp site, while searching snakes, I had the surprise to meet on the path the King of Doñana, the 'Lince iberico' (*Lynx pardina*)... At only 3 meters from me, he was grooming, not at all afraid. Even strickly forbidden - cause require authorization -, I couldn't resist to make some pictures of that incredible meeting !
After ten minutes, he disappeared in the dark, calling continually in the deep forest...



Malpolon monspessulanus



Tettigetta argentata



break - Farniiiiiiiiente...



the *Lynx pardina*...



... with a big necklace :o(



El Rocio...



... kingdom of horses

(23) Spain :

One night spent at Campofrio, hoping for some *Chalcides bedriagae cobosi* or *Macroprotodon brevis ibericus*... but I saw only several *Hemidactylus turcicus* and *Psammodromus algirus*.



Hemidactylus turcicus



other



Geomantis larvoides

On the way to Picos de Europa (for *Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica* missed elsewhere some days ago), I decided to reach the Sierra de Gredos. Of course, I found some *Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana* but in low number. All were brown, very few lightly greenish. After a consequent hike, I reached a *Salamandra salamandra almanzoris* spot but all was rather dry. Near a little stream, I succeeded and found several salamanders (3 under the same stone). In the water, a lot of larvae, some still with brachias, some without. Engendered by exhaustion, a strong migraine required to wait some hours there, going back to the car in the evening.

Once again (!), no *Vipera latastei* there, but it isn't a surprise ! Other species : *Natrix maura*, *Mauremys leprosa* (lowland), *Pelophylax perezi*, *Rana iberica*, *Lacerta schreiberi*.



Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana



other



other with sandwich



Natrix maura



other



Lacerta schreiberi, male



again, other



and again, female



and re-again, young...



Rana iberica



Salamandra salamandra almanzoris, larva



other



others



skinny adult



other



other



Mauremys leprosa



Capra pyrenaica victoriae, male

(25) Spain :

Next, was a spot to take new pictures of *Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni*. Too hot in the afternoon to see any lizard but they were out in the evening. Also some *Podarcis muralis*.





same



other



subadult



Syntarucus pirithous

(26) Spain :

Reaching Picos de Europa around 17:00 PM, I had to wait 20:00 PM to take the road to Lago Enol, closed

for private cars in summer. Once on the area, cold and mist... disappointed. Nevertheless, *Alytes obstetricans obstetricans* is abundant everywhere (five under the same stone) even calling by day. In the night, x3 *Rana temporaria parvipalmata* but one KOR. I decided to leave toward Burgos, waiting for a future better "reptile day" in the Picos.



Alytes obstetricans obstetricans



other



invasion...!



Rana temporaria parvipalmata



other



Chrysocarabus lineatus avilensis

(27) Spain :

So back to Burgos, still looking for *Vipera latastei* but without luck this time. While turning an heavy

boulder, I broke my back and was seriously handicapped for a week. In the night, a serious research gave at last two *Hyla molleri*, cool.



Hyla molleri



other



uncommon brown form of *Tettigonia viridissima*

(28) Spain :

Back to Picos de Europa, the mist was still there, but in the morning, the sun could make a great appearance, and the small area next to my car was plenty of *Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica*, awesome density ! Also some *Podarcis muralis* in the same area.

Unbelievably, I saw more busses plenty of tourists than lizards... I understand why the road is closed ; there is a strong engrossment by local agencies with dozen of vehicles on a such small road... amazing. Other species : very young *Bufo spinosus* and a fast *Zootoca vivipara louislantzi*.



Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica



same



other



same



subadult



other



Podarcis muralis



other



Pandoriana pandora



Lycaenidae sp.

(29) Spain :

In Anso valley (Pyrenees), I wanted to find *Calotriton asper* with yellow vertebral stripe. Quickly by

night, in a lovely stream, I found about 40 specimens and a lot of larvae ! Strangely, no mating. Also 4 *Rana pyrenaica*, a single *Rana temporaria*, *Bufo spinosus* and a lot of *Bufo/Rana* tadpoles. I caught by hand a nice trout.

In the morning, I was on a site found last year, where a small population of *Podarcis liolepis liolepis* exists.



Calotriton asper



other



other



other



larva



other larva



Rana pyrenaica



other



Podarcis liolepis liolepis



same



other



other



other



Empusa pennata, female

(30) France :

Back to the *Iberolacerta bonnali* spot to make more pictures. The weather was awful, with 7°C, wind and

a lot of mist. Waiting for the next day and I had the luck to get a nice clearing in the morning, so several lizards were outside. I could approach them at 10 cm with my camera without problem.



Iberolacerta bonnali



other



other



young

Back to the *Iberolacerta aurelioi* spot. The weather was frankly different than in July. Again cold and thick mist (near 0°C in the night). I slept on the parking and the next day, with the same weather I started to make this report in my car. The third day, same weather, I started to sort my pictures. I found randomly a *Salamandra salamandra* - probably - *terrestris* larvae and one adult of *Zootoca vivipara louslantzi*. In the dark, I took a look around the parking and found about ten *Salamandra*. The fourth day, I woke up beneath a full blue sky and hastily went in the mountain. After checking some wrong places, I reached the right spot at 10:00 AM. But low temperature (3°C) and wind didn't help. By luck I saw sneakily one lizard and stayed around. At 11h00 AM, several *I. aurelioi* were outside, but very wild ; probably the most difficult *Iberolacerta* to photograph (unbelievably sensitive to the noise). Nonetheless, with patience, I managed to graze their snout with my lens !



Salamandra salamandra terrestris



other



other



Salamandra habitat



Zootoca vivipara louislantzi



Iberolacerta aurelioii



other



other



other



other



other, a basking male



shy ?

(32) France :

The day after, a quest to *Vipera aspis zinnikeri* (again the same place) gave only one snake, with some *Lacerta agilis garzoni* and *Podarcis muralis*.



(33) Spain :

In Montseny, I wanted to make more pictures of *Calotriton arnoldi*. After a long time, I finally found in a very small brook a first animal, then a second very near, both outside of water : a male and a female.
Other species : *Podarcis muralis* and plenty of *Salamandra salamandra terrestris* larvae.



Calotriton arnoldi, female



same



other, male



Salamandra salamandra terrestris, larva

(34) Spain :

In Peñiscola, I made a short visit, trying to find *Emys orbicularis fritzjuergenobsti* (as it was not yet a synonym of ssp. *hispanica*). A lot of turtle were seen, but mostly *Trachemys scripta elegans*.

Unfortunately, in a very difficult habitat, it was very hard to photograph or catch any. By night in the town, I saw a big turtle in a canal (or rather a sewer !). Clothed, I went in the smelly water but I didn't see anything in the muck. After 30mn, at last, I caught the animal... but damn, big surprise... a big *Mauremys leprosa* ! I didn't know that species was also living here. Other species : *Pelophylax perezii*.

(35) France :

Near Prades to find any *Alytes obstetricans almogavarii*... In a big reservoir, hundred of tadpoles but adults seemed to be hard to see, very dry everywhere. In the night, with small rains I just heard a few songs but without conviction. Then, after a while, I did find some *Alytes* (some with eggs) on the edges. I caught a first one but several toads stayed in the inaccessible part of the pond. An attempt made me trapped on the very steep bank, sliding progressively in the water until my waist... After this risk, I took a large extension cord fixed to the car and could reach the water without terror. Other species : a very young *Salamandra salamandra terrestris* and a beautiful *Natrix maura*.



Natrix maura



Alytes obstetricans almogavarii



other



other



other



very young



hatching eggs



Sempervivum montanum



Ephippiger ephippiger laying

(36) France :

At Lac du Salagou, I tried to find some *Mantoptera*, a great place for. I saw a lot of young *Empusa*

pennata, *Iris oratoria*, *Mantis religiosa* and *Ameles decolor*. In the dark, a search for *Pelophylax kl. grafi* gave several big frogs... Other species : a young *Natrix maura*, *Bufo spinosus* and *Podarcis muralis*.



Podarcis muralis



Empusa pennata, young



Ameles decolor, female



male



Iris oratoria, brown female



again a *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*



Procambarus clarki is everywhere...



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)



Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)

(37) France :

I looked for *Saga pedo* in a know site around Montpellier but without luck. Only one by night but crushed

on the road. Same thing for snakes : *Malpolon monspessulanus*, *Coronella girondica* and *Rhinechis scalaris* KOR... Later in the night, on the way to Millau, I found another *Coronella girondica* KOR.



Coronella girondica... dead

(38) France :

Near Millau, only one *Podarcis liolepis cebennensis* and some *Podarcis muralis* in the morning. End of the trip :o(I reached Le Havre the same day.



Podarcis liolepis cebennensis

This trip was useful to have a better idea of what it's possible to find in that season, making usually my trips in the spring or in fall. By piece of evidence, Iberolacerta are not easier to find in the summertime (in a few places, results are even far better in September/October) as for snakes, they are always difficult to find after the spring. We made a great travel with a lot of new subspecies and species. I hope now to find the last ones of the Iberian peninsula during my next trip to sew up (temporarily) the spanish herping !

Many thanks to : André Lequet, Wouter Beukema, Carl Corbidge, Jeroen Speybroeck, Luis Garcia-Cardenete, Javier Gallego, Philippe Geniez, Pierre-André Crochet and especially Matthieu Berroneau for the 'hotline' ! Hope to see you once again in the field ;o)

Thanks also to Cat and Phil for a great companionship during 3 weeks of intense "work" !

Reptiles (41) :

Anguis fragilis
Chalcides striatus
Chalcides bedriagae pistaciae
Tarentola mauritanica
Hemidactylus turcicus
Chamaeleo chamaeleon
Algyroides marchi
Acanthodactylus erythrurus
Psammodromus algirus
Psammodromus occidentalis
Timon lepidus lepidus

Timon lepidus ibericus
Lacerta agilis garzoni
Lacerta bilineata
Lacerta schreiberi
Iberolacerta bonnali
Iberolacerta aurelio
Iberolacerta aranica
Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica
Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni
Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana
Iberolacerta galani
Zootoca vivipara louislantzi
Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis
Podarcis carbonelli
Podarcis bocagei
Podarcis vaucheri
Podarcis muralis
Podarcis guadarramae guadarramae
Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus
Podarcis virescens
Podarcis hispanica
Podarcis liolepis liolepis
Podarcis liolepis cebennensis
Podarcis liolepis sebastiani
Coronella girondica
Malpolon monspessulanus
Rhinechis scalaris
Hemorrhois hippocrepis
Natrix maura
Vipera aspis zinnikeri
Vipera latastei latastei
Vipera seoanei cantabrica
Emys orbicularis hispanica
Emys orbicularis fritzjuergenobsti
Mauremys leprosa
Trachemys scripta

Amphibians (20) :

Hyla molleri
Hyla meridionalis
Rana temporaria
Rana temporaria parvipalmata
Rana pyrenaica
Rana iberica
Pelophylax perezi
Pelophylax ridibundus
Pelophylax kl. grafi (?)
Alytes obstetricans obstetricans
Alytes obstetricans boscai
Alytes obstetricans almogavarii
Alytes dickhilleni (tadpoles)

Alytes cisternasii (tadpoles)
Bufo spinosus
Bufo calamita
Pleurodeles waltl
Chioglossa lusitanica longipes
Calotriton asper
Calotriton arnoldi
Triturus pygmaeus
Lissotriton boscai (larvae)
Salamandra salamandra terrestris
Salamandra salamandra almanzoris

Total = 61 spp.