

# Field Photo Report, March to August 2014 - Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Italy, France

by Frank Deschandol



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*This field report merge several little trips to Slovenia, including a few days in April/May with Jérôme Maran, Frédéric Lavail, Yoann Wyon... We (Pierre-Yves Vaucher, my girlfriend and myself) were helping them to make their new film about SLO herpetofauna. Then a 10 days trip to Croatia made in May with Pierre-Yves Vaucher, followed later by 15 days in Montenegro/Croatia in June (just me & my girlfriend). Then I stopped on a few known spots during the way back to my home, in Italy and France, late June (I was alone). And again a short trip to Italy, on the way back to Slovenia. A lot of species were find, but the goal of those trips was mainly to get new pictures of a few (sub)species and at the same time, to find a couple of new endemic species (*Dinarolacerta montenegrina* and *mosorensis*). Thus, all encountered animals have not been photographed. In Montenegro we found all species of the country except *Typhlops vermicularis*, *Rana graeca* and *Zamenis situla*. During that last trip with my car in the Balkans, we could find : x22 *Vipera ammodytes*, x9 *Vipera berus bosniensis*, x21 *Vipera ursinii macrops* (because of x3 gravid females !), x5 *Elaphe quatuorlineata*, x6 *Malpolon insignitus fuscus*, x2 *Telescopus fallax*, plenty of *Natrix* spp. and the huge amount of exactly x110 *Testudo hermanni boettgeri* ! Furthermore, we saw many dead animals on roads ; sadly, daily in huge number, especially snakes... We also still missed *Platycephalus najadum dahlii* in spite of numerous specific research. That one was seen alive only once, while 3 of them were freshly killed on road.*

*Due to the threat of many species seen, no place will be given here.*

*Many thanks to Jérôme Maran, Pierre-Yves Vaucher, Matthieu Berroneau, Bobby Bok, Jeroen Speybroeck, Konrad Mebert, Viki Kraševcand and a lot of people everywhere in Montenegro for their invitation and their delicious "Brandy" ... :)*



Main spots

**\*\*\* SLOVENIA \*\*\***





*Rana arvalis*, male



*Vipera berus berus*, melanistic





same, pitch black



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other, large female >70cm



other large specimen





same



other





same







*Lacerta agilis argus*, female





*Podarcis siculus campestris*





*Iberolacerta horvathi*



*Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*





same





*Salamandra atra* (probably ssp. *prenjensis*) from the north



*Salamandra atra prenjensis* from the south





other



other





*Coronella austriaca austriaca*





same



*Bombina variegata variegata*





Strange *Rana temporaria*



© Frank Deschandol

*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, same individual already found two years ago !





other specimen, found while searching for *Vipera aspis francisciredi*... Later, we went back at the same place, meeting Konrad Mebert, unfortunately without luck, once again...





same



*Proteus anguinus parkelj*, notice the true eyes comparing to the white *Proteus*





same







*Antheraea yamamai*, male





*Cephalanthera rubra*

**\*\*\* CROATIA \*\*\***





View from Pag island, beautiful...



...but some areas on mainland are still dangerous





*Testudo hermanni boettgeri*, young





other, in situ



*Malpolon insignitus fuscus*, tongue up....





...and down !



other





x3 *Malpolon* were seen at exactly the same place, near a stone wall, I only could catch 2 of them.





other



same





*Vipera berus bosniensis*, melanistic







other at a dump site





*Bufo viridis* (probably ssp. *viridis*), male



other, young





*Elaphe quatuorlineata*





same



*Algyroides nigropunctatus*, surprisingly either invisible or rare during all our trips





other



young





*Podarcis melisellensis fumanus*, and more patterns below :





other



other





other



other





other





other



same





other



other





other





other



other





other



*Hierophis gemonensis*, in situ





other





same



*Lacerta trilineata major*





*Lacerta viridis*, male



female





*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*





*same*



other





same



other





other





other



*Pseudopus apodus thracicus*... always abundant





Awesome fight in the middle of the road, under a burning sun !After a while, the snake gave up the job, and went into a bush...



Watch the movie !





...



...





Slovenian tourists





one of the numerous *Emys orbicularis hellenica*, in situ, on Pag island

**\*\*\* MONTENEGRO (+ALBANIA) \*\*\***





Rest for the car after a pretty shitty "road", up in the mountains...



Scutari lake





Dry and hot in Albania



© Frank Deschandol



*Vipera berus bosniensis*, very difficult to find on the place, the strong wind didn't help the 1st day.



other





same



other





same



© Frank Deschandol



other



other





other



baby



© Frank Deschandol



*Vipera ursinii macrops*, gravid female. I was probably the fastest guy ever in the world of finding a *Vipera ursinii* in the field, taking less than 1 minute after leaving the car !





other female



other female



© Frank Deschandol



*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*



© Frank Deschandol



same



other





© Frank Deschandol

other



© Frank Deschandol

other



© Frank Deschandol



other

© Frank Deschandol





other



same



© Frank Deschandol



other

© Frank Deschandol



other





other





young



© Frank Deschandol

*Telescopus fallax fallax*





same



same





young







other



© Frank Deschandol



*Natrix natrix persa*



other





other







*Malpolon insignitus fuscus*





other



other





other





© Frank Deschandol



same





young



other young





*Dolichophis caspius*, hard to see and to catch but I managed to find at least one, as in 2012, at exactly the same place





same



*Hierophis gemonensis*, abundant almost everywhere



© Frank Deschandol



*Anguis graeca*

© Frank Deschandol





young



*Pseudopus apodus*, young



© Frank Deschandol



same

© Frank Deschandol



*Dalmatolacerta oxycephala*





other





© Frank Deschandol



*Lacerta agilis bosnica*, female





other



other





male





*Zootoca vivipara*



*Lacerta trilineata major*





*Lacerta viridis*, male and female



*Podarcis muralis albanicus*



© Frank Deschandol



*Dinarolacerta mosorensis*





other



other





other



other





other







other





other



other





other





Hey you're cute, can you give me your phone number ?! Waiiiit !!



*Emys orbicularis hellenica*, male



© Frank Deschandol



*Mauremys rivulata*

© Frank Deschandol



same





© Frank Deschandol

young



© Frank Deschandol





*Triturus macedonicus*, male





female



*Lissotriton (vulgaris) graecus*, male





same





female



*Lissotriton vulgaris* (*vulgaris* ?)





*Ichthyosaura alpestris* 'carpathica', male





male and female. While touching them, those *Ichthyosaura* used to curve their head and also their body and tail, seeming dead... awesome reflex ! It's the first time ever for me to see a such behavior from that species.



*Ichthyosaura alpestris montenegrina*, male





other



female



© Frank Deschandol



*Bombina variegata scabra*

© Frank Deschandol





Other, beautiful greenish



amplexus





*Bufo viridis viridis* or *B. (viridis) variabilis* ?, female



male





*Bufo bufo bufo*





*Pelophylax shqipericus*



*Pelophylax ridibundus*





© Frank Deschandol

*Hyla arborea*



© Frank Deschandol

*Parnassius apollo*



© Frank Deschandol



*Anacamptis coriophora*





*Serapia vomeracea*

**\*\*\* ITALY \*\*\***

Two days spending on the way back in that country, two speedy and crazy days, running everywhere in the mountains as I needed to be at home, in France, before the week-end... Later, on the way back to Slovenia, I stopped again at the same place and could find a few more specimen of *aurorae*.





*Salamandra atra aurorae*, specimens found active by day, late in the afternoon, without rain.



other





other





other



other





same



other





other







*Salamandra atra pasubiensis*, Unfortunately only one young specimen could be found for a strange reason (it was rainy and not too dry on the ground). I searched during 3 hours and found that one at the very last minute. A bit frustrating when you're climbing a steep mountain for more than 2 hours to reach the spot. I also stopped there one month later, and found strictly nothing, as it was very dry up there.





*Salamandra atra pasubiensis*' habitat



*Salamandra lanzai*





*Coronella austriaca austriaca*, baby





*Anguis veronensis*, female. My main goal in Italy, having only a few crappy pictures of that newly described species



other





male



subadult





young







other





other



*Rana italica*



**\*\*\* FRANCE \*\*\***

In the french Alps, I managed to find 6 *Vipera aspis*, 3 were stripped, 3 were uniform. Again a strong wind made the search rather difficult... One month later, we found 15 *aspis* (x6 concolor and x9 stripped).



*Vipera aspis atra*





same



same





other





same



other, concolor





same



other





same





other



same





*Pseudorchis alba*





*Dactylorhiza viridis*