

# Field Report, May 5th to 17th 2010 - Italy, Croatia, Switzerland

by Frank Deschandol



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*From 5 to 17th May, I went to Northern Italy and Croatia by car with my friend Pierre-Yves for a "cool herp trip". In Italy, we were looking especially for *Salamandra atra aurorae* and *S. a. pasubiensis*, while *Vipera ammodytes* was our main desiderata in Croatia. Unfortunately, the weather was rainy and cold almost all the days, so reptiles were rather scarce. As we heard from local people : "a very unusual climate here his year...!"*

*"Hvala ljepa" to Pierre-Yves, Mario, Jeroen, Neven, Jean-Marc and all especially Wouter for their help.*



We left from Geneva, Switzerland, in the morning.

## Near Asiago (N Italy)

Once on our first place, the rainy night didn't allow us to observe any *Salamandra atra aurorae*. T° were low, about 2-3°C. Only two *Anguis veronensis*, some *Bufo bufo bufo* and one *Natrix natrix natrix*. A little bit disappointed, we decided to cancel *S. a. pasubiensis* and drive East to Venezia, hoping for a better weather lower on the plain.

## *Bufo bufo bufo*



*Natrix natrix natrix* with split necklace



Near Venezia (N Italy)

By a sunny day, we found several *Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*, some nice *Natrix natrix persa*, *Pelophylax esculenta*, *Pelophylax lessonae*, *Hyla intermedia*, *Emys orbicularis hellenica* and *Lissotriton vulgaris meridionalis*. Also a single *Bufo viridis viridis* and some *Podarcis muralis*

*maculiventris* in the garden of our hotel.

*Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*



other



other



other



*Natrix natrix persa*



*Emys orbicularis hellenica*, young (strange color but was found in a ferruginous ditch !)



same



other



*Podarcis muralis maculiventris*



*Lissotriton vulgaris meridionalis*, male



*Pelophylax ridibundus*



*Bufo viridis viridis*



*Pelophylax lessonae*





*Hyla intermedia*



improvised studio for newts... © P-Y Vaucher



**Near Muzzana del Turgnano (N-E Italy)**

In a nice place with a lot of ditches, a lot of species were found : four *Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*, plenty of *Hyla intermedia*, *Emys orbicularis hellenica*, *Natrix natrix persa*, a lot of *Rana latastei*, *Rana dalmatina*, *Lacerta bilineata*, *Triturus carnifex* and a few *Bombina variegata variegata*. Some firefly embellished our evening...

***Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius***



other



I and two *H. viridiflavus carbonarius* © P-Y Vaucher



*Natrix natrix persa*



*Natrix natrix persa*, young crushed



*Lacerta bilineata*



*Lacerta bilineata*, young



*Bombina variegata variegata*



*Hyla intermedia*



*Triturus carnifex*



*Rana dalmatina*



*Rana latastei*



other





same



*Brachytrion pratense*



*Luciola lusitanica*



### Near Vizinada (Istrie, Croatia)

We reached a nice dry and rocky area where we saw : *Podarcis muralis maculiventris*, *Podarcis siculus campestris*, *Algyroides nigropunctatus*, *Lacerta (bilineata ?)*, one *Hierophis gemonensis*, two *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, *Anguis fragilis*, *Rana dalmatina*, *Pelophylax ridibundus*, *Zamenis longissimus* DOR, and also a very young *Elaphe quatuorlineata* DOR. Just next to a big canal, two *Falso vespertinus* were hunting insects in front of our car, inside a small colony of *Falco naumanni*.

*Podarcis muralis maculiventris*



a flashy *Lacerta bilineata* male



same



*Algyroides nigropunctatus*



same



other



other



other



*Anguis fragilis*





*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*



same



*Hierophis gemonensis*



*Pelophylax ridibundus*



other



*Melitaea* sp. larva



The next day, we visited a nice cave (Jama Baredine) where we saw two *Proteus anguinus anguinus*.  
Sorry for rather bad picture but it was forbidden to use the flash :!o()

*Proteus anguinus anguinus*



### **On the way to Krk island (Croatia)**

In the beautiful Croatian mountains (we willingly avoided the highway), we made a stop in the center of a small village. In and around a nice and large pond, we could see adults and hundred of young *Bombina variegata variegata*, thousand of *Bufo bufo bufo* tadpoles, a young *Zamenis longissimus*, *Hyla arborea*, *Lissotriton vulgaris meridionalis*. There, in the night and under the rain, we were seeking *Salamandra salamandra salamandra* (seen by local people), but without luck. Only a nice *Otus scops*, very common here.

*Zamenis longissimus*, young



*Bombina variegata variegata*



others



a very young (1 cm)



*Lissotriton vulgaris meridionalis*, male...



... and a fat female



huge *Hyla arborea*





we will be quiet, promised !!



*Zerynthia polyxena polyxena*



*Narcissus radiiflorus*



Further East, we found *Anguis fragilis* and a *Lacerta (bilineata ?)*.

*Lacerta (bilineata ?)*



*Orchis morio f. alba*



strange landscape...



### **Krk island (Croatia)**

The first day on Krk was cold and rainy, and of course it was impossible to find any reptile outside. But we managed to observe : *Podarcis siculus campestris*, a black *Natrix natrix persa*, *Pelophylax ridibundus*, *Anguis fragilis* and some beautiful *Bufo viridis* (*viridis* ?) found by night in a residential area. Later a *Bubo bubo* flying above the car.

The 2nd day was better, "lucky" at last to get some shy sunbeam : adult and young *Lacerta trilineata major*, *Pseudopus apodus thracicus*, several *Hierophis gemonensis*, again *Anguis fragilis*, a pregnant female of *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*.

*Podarcis siculus campestris*



other



other



other



black *Natrix natrix persa*





*Bufo viridis (viridis ?)*



other female



male



*Lacerta trilineata major*



a young one



*Pseudopus apodus*



same



*Hierophis gemonensis*



other



*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*



same



*Euscorpius italicus*



*Euscorpius "carpathicus" group*



*Philaeus chrysops*



a red *Cetonia aurata*





*Scarabaeus variolosus*



*Copris lunaris*



*Ophrys bertolonii*



North of Krk...



On the way to Plitvice, a big *Zamenis longissimus* DOR, a few *Anguis fragilis* (once again !) and a single *Iberolacerta horvathi* in a ruin.

*Iberolacerta horvathi*



*Zamenis longissimus*



*Anguis fragilis*



**Near Plitvice (Croatia)**

In the dark, by a bad weather, we found a huge and gravid female of *Salamandra salamandra salamandra* on a small road. But further investigations the next day in the same place gave no result.

*Salamandra salamandra salamandra*



*Saturnia pavoniella*, female



Plitvice falls



fish



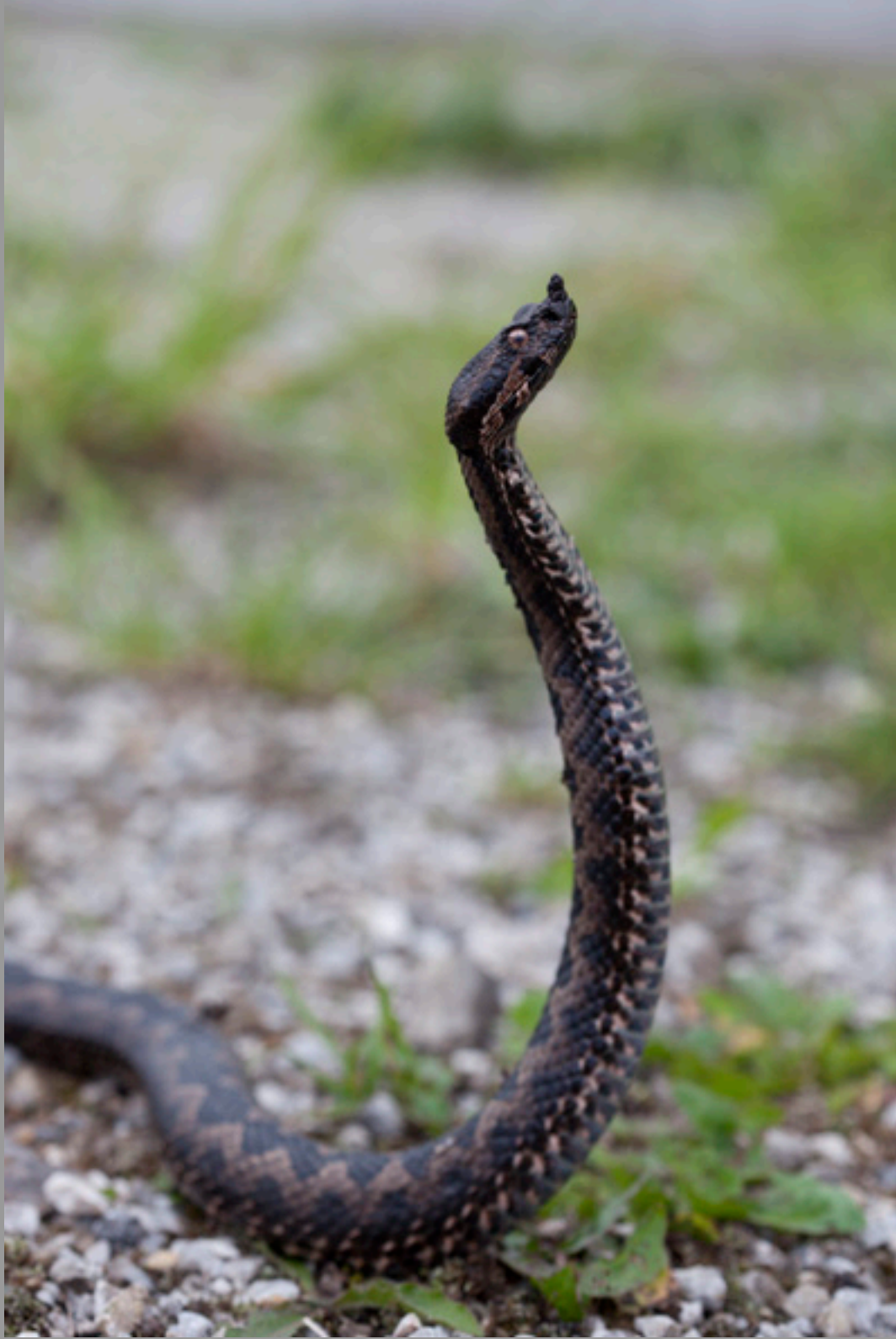
On the way to Zagreb, another *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, and *Lacerta (viridis ?)*. We made a stop near Karlovac for the night, where it was possible to see a lot of amphibians in a very small ditch : plenty of *Hyla arborea*, two *Emys orbicularis hellenica*, *Bombina variegata variegata*, *Pelophylax ridibunda*, and a lot of *Bufo viridis (ssp. ?)* tadpoles.

*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*



same





*Emys orbicularis hellenica*



*Hyla arborea*



*Cephalanthera longifolia*



**Near Zagreb (Croatia)**

A search under grey clouds gave only a young *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, some *Podarcis muralis maculiventris* and *Lacerta viridis viridis*.

*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, young



same



*Lacerta viridis viridis*



other



*Podarcis muralis muralis*



### **Back to Asiago (Italy)**

Another attempt here to see *Salamandra atra aurorae* in a similar weather that we had at the beginning of the trip. Also another attempt in the night under the rain for nothing, they weren't outside... But the day after, with determination we managed to find 3 specimens under stones, a young and two adults. Other species seen : *Rana temporaria*, a lot of *Ichthyosaura alpestris alpestris*, one *Zootoca vivipara vivipara*, *Bufo bufo bufo* and two blueish *Natrix natrix natrix* under the same stone.

We spent the last day at Monte Pasubio, trying to find *Salamandra atra pasubiensis*, but unfortunately, after 2h30 of climbing, I was unable to find the exact spot in the very steep mountain. Only *Coronella austriaca* was found there.

*Salamandra atra aurorae*, young



adult



same



same



other





same



habitat



*Rana temporaria*



*Ichthyosaura alpestris alpestris*, male



*Natrix natrix natrix*



other



*Zootoca vivipara vivipara*, young



*Coronella austriaca*



**Near Bex (Switzerland)**

I went alone in the Swiss mountains to make pictures of *Salamandra atra atra*. I found quickly several *Salamandra*, adult, subadult and young. *Ichthyosaura alpestris alpestris* was everywhere, under stones and in a cold pond made by the molten snow. Also a *Rana temporaria*.

Next, on the bank of the Lac Léman, I failed to find any *Natrix tessellata* on a known spot. Finally, close to the border with France, I found a *Zootoca vivipara vivipara* but no *Vipera berus*.

*Salamandra atra atra*



other



a lot of... *Ichthyosaura alpestris alpestris*



a female and *Rana temporaria* eggs



*Zootoca vivipara vivipara*



### **Reptiles (19) :**

*Zootoca vivipara vivipara*  
*Podarcis muralis muralis*  
*Podarcis muralis maculiventris*  
*Iberolacerta horvathi*  
*Algyroides nigropunctatus*  
*Podarcis siculus campestris*  
*Anguis fragilis*  
*Anguis veronensis*  
*Pseudopus apodus*  
*Natrix natrix natrix*  
*Natrix natrix persa*  
*Coronella austriaca*  
*Lacerta bilineata*  
*Lacerta viridis viridis*  
*Lacerta trilineata major*  
*Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*  
*Hierophis gemonensis*  
*Zamenis longissimus*  
*Elaphe quatuorlineata (D.O.R)*  
*Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*  
*Emys orbicularis hellenica*

### **Amphibians (17) :**

*Bombina variegata variegata*



*Bufo bufo bufo*  
*Bufo viridis viridis & indeterminate*  
*Rana latastei*  
*Rana dalmatina*  
*Rana temporaria*  
*Pelophylax kl. esculenta*  
*Pelophylax lessonae*  
*Pelophylax ridibundus*  
*Hyla intermedia*  
*Hyla arborea*  
*Lissotriton vulgaris meridionalis*  
*Triturus carnifex*  
*Ichthyosaura alpestris alpestris*  
*Salamandra salamandra salamandra*  
*Salamandra atra atra*  
*Salamandra atra aurorae*  
*Proteus anguinus anguinus*

**Total = 36 spp.**