

Field Report, September 21st to October 23rd 2009 - France, Spain, Portugal

by Frank Deschandol



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*From September 21st to October 23rd I travelled in all Spain, especially to find some species I missed during my last trips. My main goal was - as always - the different subspecies of *Salamandra salamandra* and also species of *Iberolacerta*.*

For that reason and because my time was 'precious', I did not pay a lot of attention to some other species already photographed (The number of species seen could be better).

A global good result even if it was too late in the season for a few reptiles. Here is my chronological report : (sorry for rather small pictures but it was imposed by their number)



Map

Near Leucate (France)

On the way, I spent a night in the south-east of France, seeking *Discoglossus pictus pictus*. I was Lucky because after some rains, I could find that species just as plenty of *Hyla meridionalis*, *Pelobates cultripes* and a few *Bufo calamita*.



Hyla meridionalis



other



Pelobates cultripes



other



other



other



Epidalea calamita



other



Discoglossus pictus pictus



other



other



other



other



Hogna radiata... and youngs !

Montseny (Spain)

Very dry here, so I couldn't find *Calotriton arnoldi* in the very small brook. I saw only one *Salamandra salamandra terrestris* and some young *Podarcis muralis*. I was unable to see any *Alytes obstetricans almogavarii* nor *Podarcis liolepis*.



Bufo spinosus, young



Salamandra salamandra terrestris

Near Font-Romeu (France)

>1900 m. Difficult to find something in that place which however seemed great for herp. T° was low in the night (about 3°C). I found 4 young *Lacerta agilis garzoni* (no adult) and one *Vipera aspis zinnikeri* after a significant search. Also several *Podarcis muralis*.



Lacerta agilis garzoni, young



other



Podarcis muralis



Vipera aspis zinnikeri



same

Near Barrage de Soulcem (France)

Flop... Unsuccessful attempt to see *Iberolacerta aurelioi* in spite of a good weather, full blue sky and sun. Too late in the season (?). I find only *Rana temporaria* and a very young *Zootoca vivipara louislantzi*. So I canceled the next step for *Iberolacerta aranica*.



Rana temporaria



Zootoca vivipara lousilantzi, very young

Cap de Long/Orédon (France)

Flop... Once again. Unsuccessful attempt to see *Iberolacerta bonnali* in spite of a good weather, full blue sky and sun. Too late in the season (?). No more *Vipera aspis zinnikeri*.

Near Bermeo (Spain)

I visited a nice coastal site with a lot of *Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis* (introduction site).



site



Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis



other



other



other

Near Burgos (Spain)

Flop... In a great area for the species, I seeked *Vipera latastei latastei*. Unfortunately, very strong winds and clouds were too much to see anything.

Picos de Europa (Spain)

Flop... I was there to see *Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica*. But in the mist and the cold, nothing was outside.

Near Cional (Spain)

Only *Rana iberica* and juveniles of *Alytes obstetricans boscai* were seen.



Rana iberica



Alytes obstetricans boscai

Northern Puebla de Sanabria (Spain)

At the Laguna de Los Peces, I looked for *Iberolacerta galani*. After 2 hours in the surroundings, nothing ; I was a little bit disappointed. When going back to the car, at last, I saw some juveniles and two adults, just close to the bank of the lake. Also *Bufo spinosus*, *Pelophylax perezi* and a young active specimen of *Coronella austriaca acutirostris*. On the way a D.O.R. *Timon lepidus ibericus*.



Iberolacerta galani



same



same



other



juvenile



Coronella austriaca acutirostris, young

Cabeza Grande de Manzaneda (Spain)

Last attempt for *Iberolacerta monticola cantabrica*. After some troubles with the GPS software (Grrr, about 150 km of mountain roads for nothing...), I reach the spot late in the night. In the morning, one more time too much wind this day. I saw some *Podarcis bocagei* lower on the way.



Podarcis bocagei



same

Near Muros (Spain)

Next, I drove on the coast to find *Chalcides bedriagae pistaciae*, on a good spot with a nice day ; very hot ! And nice place for herping, in a short time I could observe : *Chalcides striatus* (x15 !), several *Timon lepidus ibericus* (x3 big adults under the same stone !) *Psammodromus algirus*, *Podarcis bocagei*, *Coronella austriaca acutirostris* (x2) but sadly *Chalcides b. pistaciae* was not found (very hard in October).



Chalcides striatus



other



other



other



other



young



Podarcis bocagei



Coronella austriaca acutirostris



same



young



Timon lepidus ibericus, young



subadult



other subadult



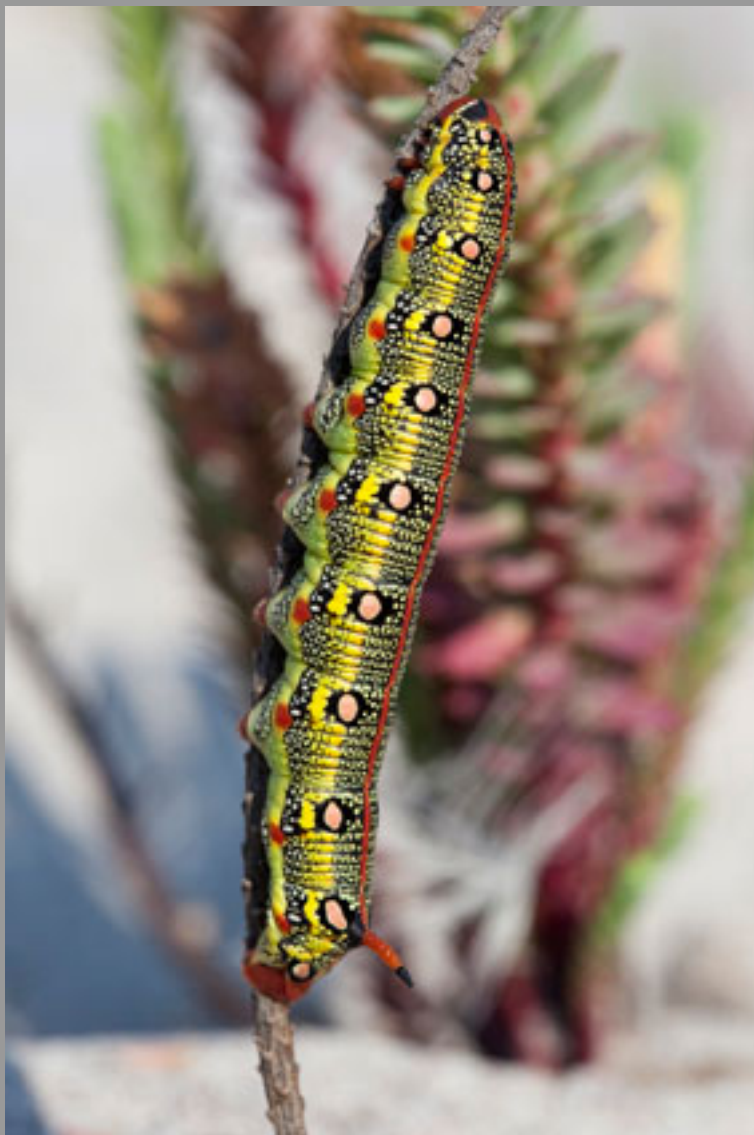
a female



another female and a big male



trails in the sand (*Timon lepidus*)



Hyles euphorbiae L5

Peneda-Gerês (Portugal)

I checked once again the area for *Vipera latastei latastei* as I was unable to find it last May. Better this time with 2 nice snakes very close to each other. However, *Vipera seoanei cantabrica* was really

impossible to find. In the same area I saw : *Lacerta schreiberi* (x12 juv. and adults), *Psammodromus algirus*, *Podarcis bocagei*, *Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus*, *Timon lepidus ibericus*, *Anguis fragilis*, *Natrix natrix astreptophora*, *Malpolon monspessulanus* (juv.), *Chioglossa lusitanica longipes* and *Rana iberica*.



young *Malpolon monspessulanus*, probably female



a large dry crepe of *Bufo spinosus*



Anguis fragilis



Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus



Lacerta schreiberi, male



another male



young



Vipera latastei latastei



same



same



other



same

Near Buçaco (Portugal)

I was looking for *Salamandra salamandra gallaica*, which was very hard to find : as everywhere, too dry... But that night, I could locate some *Triturus marmoratus*, *Chioglossa lusitanica lusitanica* (> x30 !) and finally a gravid female of salamander, just near the water. Also *Anguis fragilis* and *Rana iberica*.



habitat of *S. s. gallaica* and *Chioglossa l. lusitanica*



Anguis fragilis



Triturus marmoratus



other



other



same



Rana iberica



other



Chioglossa lusitanica lusitanica



same



others



Salamandra salamandra gallaica



same

Serra da Estrela (Portugal)

The target here was *Iberolacerta monticola monticola*. A strong wind blew in the valley and hope was very low. In the morning all lizards were hidden, but I found the first adult specimen under the first stone !
In the afternoon, a few lizards were surprisingly outside.



Iberolacerta monticola monticola



same



same



same



other



same



young



subadult



juvenile



nice tail...

Peña de Francia (Spain)

No success about *Iberolacerta martinezricai* there. Strong wind and temperature $< 0^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the night didn't help. Only a *Rana iberica* in a stream.

Sierra de Gredos (Spain)

In the mountains, I saw one *Lacerta schreiberi* (juv.), and a lot of *Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana*. I reached the Laguna Grande once again to find some great *Salamandra salamandra almanzoris*. At 2 meters from the path, a Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) flew off, impassive and invisible all the day to the flood of hickers, very abundant that day. In the evening, very tired but motivated, I went back in the mountains, trying to find *Bufo bufo gredosicola*... After a long walk, two toads were found near the water. On the way leading to my car, I heard wolfs' screams (*Canis lupus*) which gave a strange and surrealist nocturnal

ambiance ! One more time, I failed to find *Vipera latastei latastei* there (typical wind, 17°c and sun). Lower in the south, I visited a know site, where Wouter and Philip could observe a big *Pleurodeles waltl*, captive in a well. I caught the large animal of size about 24.5 cm ; not so bad... Then, I released it in the Rio Tietar. At this place I found : *Alytes cisternasii* (calling), *Pelophylax perezi*, *Natrix maura*, *Malpolon monspessulanus*, x2 *Rhinechis scalaris*, *Mauremys leprosa*. Sadly, a short night drive brought x2 fresh D.O.R. *Rhinechis scalaris*, a *Natrix maura* and a bat (*Pipistrellus sp.*). One could hear an Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*) all the night long...



Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana



same



other



subadult



young



same



Capra pyrenaica victoriae, male



Salamandra salamandra almanzoris



other



other



same



Bufo bufo gredosicola



same



same



other



same



Pelobates cultripes



other



Alytes cisternasii



other



big *Pleurodeles waltl*



Pelophylax perezi



Psammodromus algirus



Natrix maura



Malpolon monspessulanus, young female



same



same, belly



Rhinechis scalaris



same



bad night for snakes... on 3 km only.

Navacerrada (Spain)

Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni was easily found, but under stones, cause the strong wind didn't allow the lizards to be outside. Also a single *Podarcis muralis* and a young *Coronella austriaca austriaca*.



Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni



same



same



subadult



Podarcis muralis



Coronella austriaca austriaca

Peñalara (Spain)

I wanted to find *Salamandra salamandra almanzoris* from that area. Unfortunately the direct access to the lagoon est forbidden and a guard oversaw all the day !! But I did find a salamander under the only one stone lifted. So I suppose they are rather abundant. Morphological characteristics of the animal are actually similar to those of Gredos.



you are warned...



Salamandra salamandra almanzoris



same

Embalse de Navalcan (Spain)

A short stop in the night with only again *Pelobates cultripes*, *Podarcis guadarramae guadarramae* (juv.), *Timon lepidus lepidus* and *Tarentola mauritanica*. However I made a wonderful watching of a Small-Spotted Genet (*Genetta genetta*) on a tree next to the road.



Tarentola mauritanica, young



Pelobates cultripipes

Monfragüe (Spain)

I spent a few days in Monfragüe, searching *Salamandra salamandra bejarae*. The ground was unbelievably dry. I saw : *Mauremys leprosa*, *Natrix maura* (Juv.), *Pelophylax perezi*, *Psammodromus algirus* and a D.O.R. *Hemorrhois hippocrepis* (juv.). A phone call to the weather report informed me of strong rains to come directly on the region. But the next day, no rain at all, in spite of a lot of dark clouds. So I decided to leave to the south, but after about 80km on the highway, I met finally a true deluge. Then, I went back to Monfragüe waiting for the night... And what I discovered this night was the nightmare of herpers. Hundreds of amphibians crushed everywhere on roads : *Pleurodeles waltl*, *Triturus pygmaeus*, *Pelobates cultripipes*, *Bufo spinosus*, *Pelophylax perezi*, *Bufo calamita* and even *Mauremys leprosa*. I was really queasy, I had never seen in my life a such apocalyptic "spectacle". I rescued what I could but it was too much for a single man... With the rain, *Alytes cisternasii* started calling in a lot of places. But for inexplicable reasons, I found only one *S. s. bejarae* within 3 hours of research, I'm still wondering why... On a path, fresh tracks of the Iberian Lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) on the wet dirt, which took the same way... but five minutes ago ! Later in the night, I was face to face with an European Otter (*Lutra lutra*), eating a crayfish in a small water puddle pool. I finished my prospecting at 5.00 AM.



Hemorrhois hippocrepis



Pleurodeles waltl



other



same



juvenile



another juvenile



and another one



Alytes cisternasii



other



Bufo calamita



other



Pelobates cultripipes



other



other



Triturus pygmaeus



other



other



other



other



other



other



a little part of my collect on the road. Of course, I released them in a safe area



Salamandra salamandra bejarae



same

Sierra Norte (Spain)

Too dry here, the rain had not touched that area, and I failed to find *Salamandra salamandra morenica*.
Next to a river, some *Discoglossus galganoi galganoi*.



Discoglossus galganoi galganoi



other



other



other



young



Pipistrellus kuhli

Campofrio (Spain)

Only *Natrix maura*, plenty of young *Hemidactylus turcicus* and *Hyla meridionalis*.



Hemidactylus turcicus, young



other young

Coto Doñana (Spain)

Still no luck about *Vipera latastei gaditana*... I saw : a D.O.R. *Malpolon monspessulanus*, *Tarentola mauritanica*, *Psammodromus algirus*, *Psammodromus occidentalis*, *Acanthodactylus erythrurus* (juv. only), *Rhinechis scalaris* (juv.), *Alytes cisternasii* (calling) and a nice *Chamaeleo chamaeleon* of big size (24 cm). Extremely difficult to find anywhere *Podarcis carbonelli*.



Podarcis carbonelli



same



Chamaelo chamaeleon



young



other acrobatic young



Alytes cisternasii



other male



other male



Rhinechis scalaris, young



same



Scarabaeus cicatricosus, very common



Ischnura graellsii

Serra de Monchique (Portugal)

At a first spot, I succeeded in finding one *Salamandra salamandra crespoi*. Thereafter, I found two smaller salamanders at another place, under stones near a brook. Later a male of *Lacerta schreiberi* and a D.O.R. subadult of *Malpolon monspessulanus*.



habitat of *S. s. crespoi*



Salamandra salamandra crespoi



same



other



same



young



Lacerta schreiberi, male

Bordeira (Portugal)

Very nice coastal landscape but very few reptiles were outside except *Psammodromus occidentalis* in quantity...



landscape



Psammodromus occidentalis



same



other



same



other



big larva of *Myrmeleontidae*



Buthus ibericus, where is the male ?!!



Charaxes jasius, male

Huelva/Doñana (Spain)

I met Juan Pablo which showed me some nice *Vipera latastei gaditana*. They came from a breeding to strengthen the local population. I was very glad, being unable to find one by myself. So I insert these pics on purpose, and I need to go back someday to find that snake in the wild ! Other species seen : *Chalcides bedriagae cobosi* (sand dunes morphotype), *Hemidactylus turcicus*, *Tarentola mauritanica*, *Psammodromus algirus*, *Hemorrhoids hippocrepis* (young), *Blanus mariae*, *Macroprotodon brevis*, *Rhinechis scalaris*, *Malpolon monspessulanus*, *Pelophylax perezi* and a D.O.R *Pelobates cultripes*.



beach near Mazagon



Chalcides bedriagae cobosi



Psammodromus hispanicus hispanicus



Vipera latastei gaditana, male



female



same



another male



same



... me in action ; photo : Juan Pablo GV



Macroprotodon brevis



Blanus mariae



Hemidactylus turcicus



other



Hemorrhoids hippocrepis, young



Pelophylax perezi



Uca tangeri, male

Los Alcornocales (Spain)

I was very lucky to find quickly after a walk, a very nice *Salamandra salamandra longirostris*, a gravid female. I saw later that it was the same specimen found by Wouter and Philip in 2007 ! Further

investigation gave another one, juvenile. Also *Podarcis vaucheri* (juv. & subad. only), *Pelophylax perezi*, *Discoglossus galganoi jeanneae* (juv.) and 2 very young D.O.R. *Malpolon monspessulanus*. The wanted *Pelodytes ibericus* stayed impossible to find.



Salamandra salamandra longirostris



same



same



young



Macrothele calpetana

Las Sierras de Cazorla/Segura (Spain)

I spent only one day there, seeking *Algyroides marchi*, but without luck. I found : *Discoglossus galganoi* (*jeanneae* ?), *Alytes dickhilleni* (adults and youngs) *Podarcis virescens*, *Timon lepidus lepidus* (juv.), a D.O.R. *Rhinechis scalaris* and a D.O.R. *Hemorrhois hippocrepis*. Next, a short unsuccessful stop at Puebla de Don Fadrique.



Timon lepidus, young



D.O.R. *Rhinechis scalaris*, young



D.O.R. *Hemorrhoidis hippocrepis*, young



Alytes dickhilleni



young



another young



Discoglossus galganoi jeanneae



Podarcis virescens

Near Lorca (Spain)

After about 6 hours in the field, only a young *Testudo graeca* was located, coming along with a young *Podarcis hispanica* (Juv.), *Acanthodactylus erythrurus* (Juv.) and several *Psammodromus edwardsianus*. In an old swimming pool without water, 3 unfortunate and skinny *Bufo calamita* were captive. At the exact place where I found a big *Timon nevadensis* in May, I got surprise to find a hunter - a little bit confused - hidden in the bush... so no more herp in the area. Anyway the site was overrun by flies which were especially dead boring !



Psammodromus edwardsianus



other



Podarcis hispanica, juvenile with a fluo tail



Testudo graeca, young



same



Bufo calamita very rickety



other



Argiope lobata, female

It should be the end of the trip but, once again, by the weather report, I knew that rains and storms were shortly awaited in Andalusia... so...

... Back to Huelva and Sierra Norte !! (Spain)

Two days later, only 12°C in the afternoon, with winds and rainstorm ; that sounded great for amphibians !



a very ~~bad~~ good day in Andalusia !!

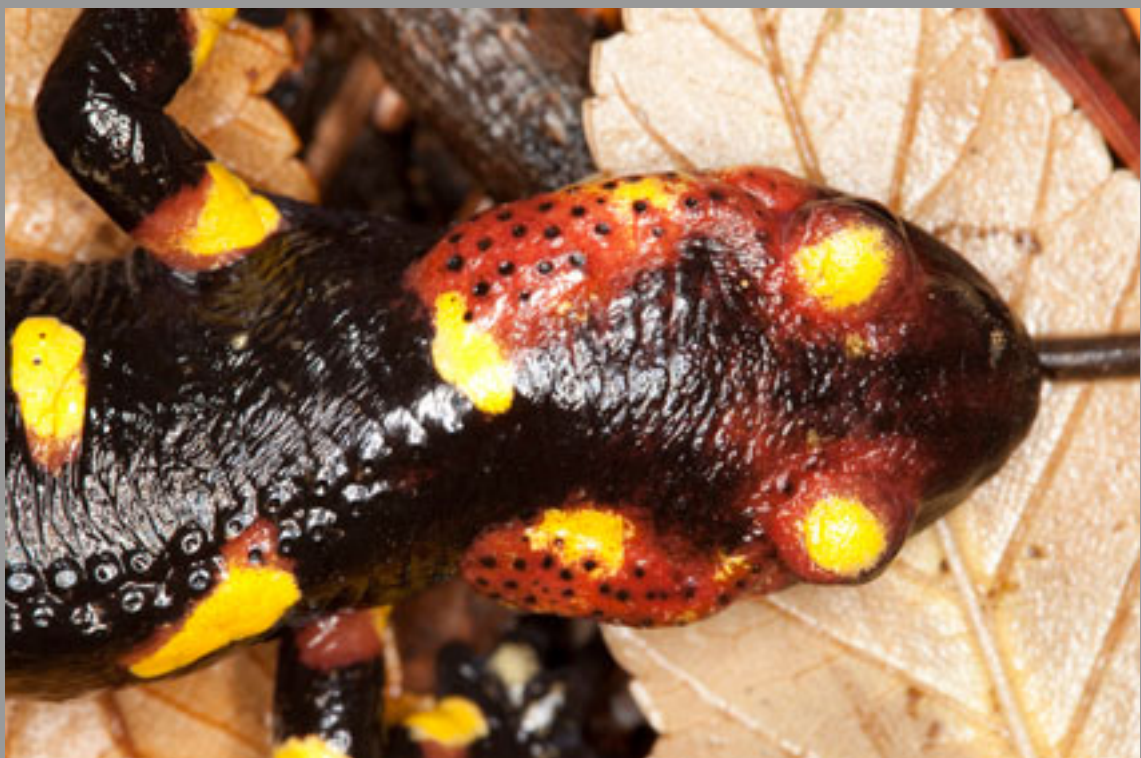
I drove by night to find : *Hyla meridionalis*, *Pelophylax perezi*, *Alytes cisternasii*, *Bufo spinosus*, *Pelobates cultripes*, *Pleurodeles waltl*, x2 *Salamandra salamandra morenica* (also x2 D.O.R.) and a highly unexpected *Pelodytes ibericus* !



Salamandra salamandra morenica



same



same



gravid female



same



no comment...

On the way to Sierra Norte, a lot of D.O.R. and alive amphibians of : *Pelobates cultripes*, *Bufo calamita*,

Alytes cisternasii, *Bufo spinosus*, *Salamandra salamandra morenica* (x8 alive and x2 D.O.R. ; densities are always low), and *Pleurodeles waltl*. Of the latter, I removed from the road a big "lucky" adult with "only" a broken mandible...

Unfortunately, no time to reach Los Alconorcales :o((



... such a shame...



... so nice *Bufo calamita*...



Bufo calamita alive ! male



female



Pelobates cultripipes



a redish young *Bufo spinosus*



Alytes cisternasii



other



young



Pelodytes ibericus



same



Discoglossus galganoi galganoi



Salamandra salamandra morenica



other



other



other



other



other



other



young

... and back to Gredos !! (Spain)

The next day, I left to France, but in the evening, I planned a short stop in the east part of Gredos for *Salamandra salamandra bejarae*, in a place where I spotted some larvae a few years ago. Still under the rain, I found quickly 7 big salamanders, very similar, on a small path. A nice end !



Salamandra salamandra bejarae



other



same



other



other



other



same

I thank : Matthieu Berroneau, Wouter Beukema, Luis G. Cardenete, Stéphane Vitzthum, Jeroen Speybroeck, Gabriel Martinez, Daniel Escoriza, Matt Wilson, Pierre-Yves Vaucher and especially Juan Pablo Gonzalez de la Vega.

Reptiles (37)

Chamaeleo chamaeleon
Blanus mariae
Acanthodactylus erythrurus
Tarentola mauritanica
Hemidactylus turcicus
Podarcis bocagei
Podarcis guadarramae lusitanicus
Podarcis guadarramae guadarramae
Podarcis virescens
Podarcis muralis
Podarcis hispanica
Podarcis pityusensis pityusensis
Podarcis vaucheri

Podarcis carbonelli
Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni
Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana
Iberolacerta galani
Iberolacerta monticola monticola
Lacerta schreiberi
Lacerta agilis garzoni
Psammodromus algirus
Psammodromus occidentalis
Psammodromus edwardsianus
Zootoca vivipara louislantzi
Timon lepidus ibericus
Timon lepidus lepidus
Anguis fragilis
Chalcides bedriagae cobosi
Chalcides striatus
Coronella austriaca austriaca
Coronella austriaca acutirostris
Rhinechis scalaris
Natrix maura
Natrix natrix astreptophora
Malpolon monspessulanus
Macroprotodon brevis ibericus
Hemorrhois hippocrepis
Vipera aspis zinnikeri
Vipera latastei latastei
Mauremys leprosa
Testudo graeca graeca

Amphibians (18)

Triturus marmoratus
Triturus pygmaeus
Hyla meridionalis
Alytes obstetricans boscai
Alytes dickhilleni
Alytes cisternasii
Bufo calamita
Bufo spinosus
Bufo bufo gredosicola
Discoglossus pictus
Discoglossus galganoi galganoi
Discoglossus galganoi jeanneae
Pelobates cultripipes
Pelodytes ibericus
Pleurodeles waltl
Salamandra salamandra terrestris
Salamandra salamandra morenica
Salamandra salamandra bejarae
Salamandra salamandra almanzoris
Salamandra salamandra gallaica
Salamandra salamandra crespoi

Salamandra salamandra longirostris
Chioglossa lusitanica lusitanica
Chioglossa lusitanica longipes
Rana temporaria
Rana iberica
Pelophylax perezi

Total = 55 spp.