

Field Report, June 26th 2009 - Spanish Pyrenees

by Frank Deschandol



All pictures © Frank Deschandol & Philippe Sabine

Looking for *Hyles nicaea*, a very scarce moth (Sphingidae) in southern France, I decided to spend a short day in the Spanish Pyrenees, near Jaca, especially to seek *Rana pyrenaica*... once again. I missed this frog during my latest trip and also some years ago, and of course I was very frustrated !

After a while, overturning a lot of stones in a small brook, I found at last the first one. Unfortunately, further investigations gave nothing except some *Calotriton asper*.

In water, plenty of tadpoles : *Bufo spinosus*, a few *Alytes obstetricans obstetricans* and some small indeterminate ones.

By night I could locate 3 other *Rana pyrenaica*, again *Calotriton asper*, larvae of *Salamandra salamandra fastuosa* and two *Alytes obstetricans obstetricans* by their songs.

Overall, I think *R. pyrenaica* is essentially nocturnal, that's why I missed it everytime by day. That's the key to success. Moreover, I was surprised to find one frog next to a log from about 5 meters of a torrent.

I saw 5 or 6 juveniles of frog in the grass, about 1.5 cm. I think they could be *R. pyrenaica* rather than *R. temporaria*, but that requires confirmation.

I also found a lot of *Podarcis muralis* everywhere. On the way, unfortunately a sub adult of *Malpolon monspessulanus* injured by a car at the middle of the road. I thought it was dead but the snake seemed to be roughly Ok in spite of a bloody eye. I let it go in a bush.

At La Pierre St Martin, a young *Zootoca vivipara* and again a lot of *Podarcis muralis*. I reached Le Havre the very next day.



Hyles nicaea, imago male and caterpillar



Calotriton asper



Calotriton asper



Calotriton asper



Biotope



Rana pyrenaica



Rana pyrenaica (same)



Rana pyrenaica juvenile



Rana pyrenaica juvenile



Rana pyrenaica juvenile



Rana pyrenaica



Rana pyrenaica



« big » *Rana pyrenaica* of maximum size (4.8 cm)



Rana pyrenaica (same)



Rana pyrenaica (same)



Alytes obstetricans obstetricans



Alytes obstetricans obstetricans



Bufo spinosus



Bufo spinosus, tadpoles



Orchis ustulata



Podarcis muralis



Podarcis muralis



Malpolon monspessulanus, injured



Malpolon monspessulanus, injured



Smerinthus ocellatus, male



Calopteryx xanthostoma, male

Amphibians (5) :

Rana pyrenaica
Bufo spinosus
Alytes obstetricans obstetricans
Calotriton asper
Salamandra salamandra fastuosa (larvae)

Reptiles (3) :

Zootoca vivipara lousilantzi
Podarcis muralis
Malpolon monspessulanus

Total = 8 spp.