COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

# Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles

Strasbourg, 4-5 May 2006

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# REPORT

*Document*
*prepared by*
*the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

The Standing Committee is invited to:

1. take note of the report of the meeting.

## CONTENTS

## 1. Opening of the meeting by the Chairman

With the Chair's permission, the new Head of the Natural Heritage Division, Mr Gianluca Silvestrini, welcomed participants, and introduced himself and the Secretariat, highlighting the recent changes of staff and the outcome of the Council of Europe's Summit of Heads of State of Governments held in Warsaw in May 2005.

The Chairman, Mr Richard Podloucky, welcomed participants (a list of which is included in Appendix 1) and opened the meeting. Participants introduced themselves, including their work and experience in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Secretariat, the draft agenda was adopted with the following amendment: a point on national reports was added between agenda items 3 and 4 (see final version in Appendix 2).

## 3. Introduction by the Secretariat

The Secretariat recalled that the previous meeting of the Group of Experts took place in September 2003, where the current Chair (Mr Podloucky, Germany) and Vice-Chair (Mrs Rannap, Estonia) were elected. It was explained that this election was valid for this meeting and that new elections of Chair and Vice-Chair will be conducted at the next meeting of the Group of Experts.

## 4. Progress in amphibians and reptile conservation since the last meeting of the Group of Experts (September 2003) – National Reports

The Chair summarised the main results of the meeting in September 2003, held in Malmö (Sweden), and progress made on some topics in the meantime.

Oral reports were given by the following states: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Switzerland. The written reports received after the meeting are found as Appendix 3 to this report.

Some common points of particular relevance were the decline of numerous species; the preparation of inventories and new red lists of amphibian and reptiles in many countries, as well as national action plans or programmes; the destruction and mismanagement of habitats; and the identification of priority sites for the conservation of reptiles and amphibians.

The Group agreed to address the future format and content of these national reports at its next meeting.

A brief oral report on the implementation of Recommendation No.84 (2000) on Milos viper was given by the expert from Greece, highlighting the monitoring programme on road killings. Written reports on Milos viper and *Coluber gyarosensis* will be sent to the Secretariat and presented to the Standing Committee.

The expert from France gave an update on *Testudo hermanni hermanni* in Plaine des Maures (France), in the context of Recommendation No. 118 (2005), including information on a recent decree adopted in March 2006; current plans to create a nature reserve; a related stakeholders consultation held in April 2006, and the preparation of a management plan. A written report will be presented to the Standing Committee.

Regarding *Testudo graeca graeca* in Spain, the Chairman noted that no official information had been received from Spain regarding the implementation of Recommendation No. 104 (2003), but the situation does not seem to have improved due to the development of golf courses. In the absence of an expert from Spain, the Group of Experts agreed to ask the Spanish authorities to provide up-to-date information on the conservation status and threats to this species to the Standing Committee.

The experts from Germany and the Czech Republic informed about some progress regarding the implementation of Recommendation No. 106 (2003) on the conservation of the Aesculapian snake *Zamenis longissimus* (*Elaphe longissima*). A short report on this issue will be presented at the Standing Committee meeting in November 2006.

## 5. Presentation and discussion of the draft action plans:

The consultant, Mr Paul Edgar, gave an introduction to the following five draft action plans to be discussed, and which were prepared in 2004 and 2005:

- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Italian Agile Frog *Rana latastei* in Europe;
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* Species Complex in Europe;
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Meadow Viper *Vipera ursinii* in Europe;
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Aesculapian Snake *Zamenis longissimus* in Europe; and
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* in Northwest Europe.

The consultant encouraged experts to provide comments and feedback focusing on the objectives and actions listed within each draft action plan, as well as identify any major additions that may be needed. Comments will be acknowledged in the final version of the action plans.

The general feedback on the five draft action plans produced by the consultant was very positive and complimentary. However, the Group of Experts agreed that the length and structure of the draft action plans needed to be reviewed to address different levels of priority and indicative timeframes.

## 6. Discussion of the different topics raised

Experts provided specific comments on each draft action plan. Some countries had already sent comments and materials before the meeting (i.e. Estonia, Italy, Moldova, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden). The following countries indicated that they will send further information after the meeting:

- On *Rana latastei:* Croatia, Switzerland;
- On *Triturus cristatus:* Croatia, France, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Germany.
- On *Vipera ursinii*: France, Hungary
- On *Zamenis longissimus*: France, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Germany
- On *Lacerta agilis*: France, Germany

Participants agreed that it would be useful to add a paragraph at the beginning of the text explaining the framework of these action plans, in terms of conservation status and action, and differentiating between politicians and scientists. A summary will be added, with an extended version for decision-makers.

The following calendar was agreed in order to finalise the action plans in time for submission to the Standing Committee in November 2006:

**- By Wednesday 31 May 2006**:

1) Experts to send short written national reports to be included them in the report of the meeting

2) The consultant will submit one example of action plan edited to follow the recommendations of the group. It will be circulated to members of the Group, who will have one month to send comments.

3) Written comments on the five action plans, as well as photos and any other materials, to be sent to the consultant (paul.edgar@herpconstrust.org.uk, with copy to the secretariat: carolina.lasen-diaz@coe.int)

**- By Friday 30 June 2006:**

4) Comments on the "model" action plan (see 1) above) to be sent to the consultant with copy to the Secretariat (as above). Other materials/comments regarding the content of the draft action plans can also be sent to the consultant before this second deadline.

**- By Monday 31 July 2006:**

5) The consultant will send complete revised versions of the five draft action plans, which will be circulated to the Group shortly afterwards.

**- By Monday 11 September 2006:**

6) Final comments to the complete versions of the draft action plans to be sent to the consultant (with copy to the Secretariat).

**- By Monday 25th September 2006:**

7) Final deadline to receive the finalised version of all draft action plans in time to prepare them for the Standing Committee meeting on 27-30 November 2006.

## 7. Presentation and discussion of the draft recommendation on further annotation of the names of amphibian and reptile species listed in the appendices of the Convention

The consultant introduced the draft recommendation. After discussion, it was agreed to proceed on the basis of including only the errors in the annotations of the names of amphibian and reptile species listed in the Appendices of the Bern Convention. A separate document including recent changes of scientific names will be submitted to the Standing Committee for information purposes, as not all new names are widely accepted.

## 8. Future work on amphibians and reptiles

After discussion, the Group proposed to select the following species as priorities for European Action Plans to be prepared in the next two years:

- Amphibians: *Pelobates fuscus* and *Proteus anguinus*
- Reptiles: *Testudo hermanni hermani* and *Lacerta lepida*

The Group agreed to add the following species as priorities to be discussed at the next meeting: *Vipera nikolskii* (Ukraine) and *Typhlops vermicularis* (Croatia)

The Group agreed to address monitoring of implementation of action plans at its next meeting. It further recommended that the next meeting be held in 2008-2009.

## 9. Any other business

None

**Appendix 1**

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

## I. EXPERTS / EXPERTS

**AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN**
Mr Geyhun PASHAYEV, Department of Biodiversity and Natural Protected Areas, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, B. Aghayev Street 100 A, AZ-1073 BAKU.
Tel: +99 412 492 71 43. Fax: +99 412 492 59 07. E-mail: vedcey@mail.ru

**BULGARIA / BULGARIE**
Mr Valeri GEORGIEV, Chief Expert, Ministry of Environment and Water, 22 Maria Luiza Blvd, 1000 SOFIA
Tel: +359 2 940 61 51. Fax: +359 2 980 96 41. E-mail: nnpsf@moew.government.bg

**CROATIA / CROATIE**
Mr Eduard KLETECKI, Curator for Herpetology and Education, Croatian Natural History Museum, Demetrova 1, 10000 ZAGREB.
Tel: +385 1 4851700. Fax: +385 1 4851644. E-mail: Eduard.Kletecki@hpm.hr (E)

Mrs Maja GLUHAKOVIĆ, Državni zavod za zaštitu prirode, Savska cesta 41/23, p.p. 50, 10144 ZAGREB.
Tel: +385 1 4866 188. Fax: +385 1 4866 187. E-mail: maja.gluhakovic@dzzp.hr

**CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE**
Mr Petr ROTH, Ph.D., Director, Biodiversity Protection Department, Ministry of Environment, Vršovická 65, CZ-10010 PRAHA 10
Tel: +420 267 122 038. Fax: +420 267 310 328. E-mail: petr_roth@env.cz or roth@env.cz (E)

**ESTONIA / ESTONIE**
Mrs Riinu RANNAP [Vice-Chair], Senior officer, Ministry of the Environment, Narva Road 7A, 15172 TALLINN. Tel: +372 6262 889. Fax: +372 6262 901. E-mail: Riinu.Rannap@envir.ee

**FRANCE / FRANCE**
Mr Vincent BENTATA, Chargé de mission pour les reptiles et amphibiens, Sous-Direection de la Chasse, de la Faune et de la Flore sauvage, Direction de la nature et des paysages, ministère de l'Ecologie et du Développement durable, 20 avenue de Ségur, 75302 PARIS SP.
Tel : +33 142 19 18 66 E-mail : vincent.bentata@ecologie.gouv.fr

Mr Patrick HAFFNER, Département Ecologie et gestion de la biodiversité, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, USM 304 / UMS 2699 Inventaire et suivi de la Biodiversité, Case Postale 53, 57 rue Cuvier, F75231 PARIS Cedex 05
Tel : +33 140 79 31 62. Fax : +33 140 79 35 53. E-mail: haffner@mnhn.fr

**GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE**
Mr Richard PODLOUCKY, [Chair], Niedersächsischer Landesbetrieb für Wasserwirtschaft, Küsten- und Naturschutz (NLWKN), Betriebsstelle Hannover-Hildesheim, AB 44 – Artenschutz, Göttinger Chaussee 76 A, D-30453 HANNOVER
Tel.+49 511-3034-3202. Fax. +49 511-3034-3504.
E-mail: richard.podloucky@nlwkn-h.niedersachsen.de. Internet: www.nlwkn.de

**GREECE / GRÈCE**
Mrs Demetra SPALA, Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, Environmental Planning Division, Natural Environment Management Section, 36 Trikalon Str., 11523 ATHENS.
Tel: +30 210 698 3467. Fax: +30 210 691 84 87. E-mail: d.spala@dpers.minenv.gr (E)

**HUNGARY / HONGRIE**
Mr. Botond BAKO, Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water, Office of Nature Conservation, Nature Conservation Department – Secretary, Kolto u. 21., H-1121 BUDAPEST
Tel: +36(1)391 1754. Fax: +36(1)391 1785. E-mail: bako@mail.kvvm.hu

Mr Bálint HALPERN, LIFE-project manager, MME BirdLife Hungary, Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society, Költo u. 21. 1121 BUDAPEST
Tel: +36 20 478 7070. Fax : +36 1 275 62 67. E-mail: halpern.balint@mme.hu or halpern.balint@freemail.hu

**LATVIA / LETTONIE**
Mrs Margita DEICMANE, SIA "Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment", Skolas iela 10 – 8, LV-1010 RIGA
tel: +371 7242411. Fax: +371 7242466. E-Mail: margita@environment.lv

**ROMANIA / ROUMANIE**
Mr Alexandru IFTIME, "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History, Sos. Kiseleff no. 1, Sector 1, 011341 BUCHAREST
Tel. +40 21 3128826. Fax : +40 21 3128863. E-mail: aiftime@antipa.ro or alexandru_iftime@yahoo.com (E)

**SLOVAKIA / SLOVAQUIE**
Ms Lubomíra VAVROVÁ, Zoologist, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, P. O. Box 5, 974 01 BANSKÁ BYSTRICA.
Tel : +421 484713622. E-mail: vavrova@sopsr.sk

**SWITZERLAND / SUISSE**
Dr. Benedikt SCHMIDT, Koordinationsstelle fuer Amphibien-, und Reptilienschutz in der Schweiz (KARCH), Bernastrasse 15, 3005 BERN
Tel: +41 031 350 74 55. Fax: +41 031 350 74 99. E-mail: benedikt.schmidt@unine.ch. Site web: http://www.karch.ch/; http://www.zool.unizh.ch/static/ecology/people/bschmidt/

## 2. OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

**SOCIETE HERPETOLOGIQUE DE FRANCE (SHF)**
Mr Jean-Pierre VACHER, 77 Grand'Rue, 67000 Strasbourg
E-mail: overmuch51@hotmail.com

**SOCIETE NATIONALE DE PROTECTION DE LA NATURE ET D'ACCLIMITATION DE FRANCE**
Mr Jacques FRETEY, Administrateur et Herpétologiste, 9 rue Cels, F-75014 PARIS, France.
Tel : +33 143 20 15 39. Fax : +33 143 20 15 71. E-mail : snpn@wanadoo.fr

## 3. CONSULTANT / CONSULTANT

Mr Paul EDGAR, Projects Officer, Societas Europaea Herpetologica (SEH) Representative, c/o The Herpetological Conservation Trust, 655a Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 4AP, United Kingdom.
Tel : +44 1202 391319. Fax: +44 1202 392785. E-mail : Paul.edgar@Herpconstrust.org.uk (E)

Mr Anton H.P. STUMPEL, Alterra, Green World Research, Postbus 47, NL-6700 AA WAGENINGEN, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 317 478763. Fax: + 31 317 424988. E-mail : anton.stumpel@wur.nl (E)

## 4. SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT

**Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe, Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage / Direction de la Culture et du Patrimoine culturel et naturel, F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX, France**
Tel : +33 3 88 41 20 00. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51

Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI, Head of the Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Chef de la Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 3 88 41 35 59. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : gianluca.silvestrini@coe.int

Ms Carolina LASÉN-DÍAZ, Administrator of the Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Administrateur de la Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 390 21 56 79. Fax : +33 388 41 37 51. E-mail : carolina.lasen-diaz@coe.int

Mrs Françoise BAUER, Principal administrative assistant / Assistante administrative principale, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 3 88 41 22 61. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : francoise.bauer@coe.int

Mrs Véronique de CUSSAC, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 3 88 41 34 76 Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : veronique.decusac@coe.int

**Appendix 2**

# Bern Convention Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles

Strasbourg, Room 14 (4-5 May 2006)

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## AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the Group of Experts

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Introduction by the Secretariat

4. Progress in amphibians and reptile conservation since the last meeting (September 2003) – National Reports

5. Presentation of the following draft action plans by Mr. Paul Edgar:

- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Italian Agile Frog *Rana latastei* in Europe
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* Species Complex in Europe
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Meadow Viper *Vipera ursinii* in Europe
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Aesculapian Snake *Zamenis longissimus* in Europe
- Action Plan for the Conservation of the Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* in Northwest Europe

6. Discussion of the different topics raised

7. Presentation and discussion of the draft recommendation on further annotation of the names of amphibian and reptile species listed in the appendices of the Convention

8. Future work on amphibians and reptiles

9. Any other business

**Appendix 3**

## NATIONAL REPORTS / RAPPORTS NATIONAUX

## I. BULGARIA / BULGARIE

**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATERS**
**National nature Protection Service**

67, Wilian Gladstone Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria, Tel. (00 359 2) 940 6151, Fax (00 359 2) 981 66 10,

# NATIONAL REPORT

## ON PROGRESS ON CONSERVATION OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN BULGARIA SINCE 2002

The group of Amphibian and Reptilian species are represented in Bulgaria by 54 species (Table 1) including respectively 17 Amphibians and 37 Reptiles. 13 Amphibian species and 23 - Reptiles species are strict protected under Appendix III and 3 Amphibians are subject of regulated use under appendix IV of the Biodiversity Act (SG, 77, 2002, amended in 2005).

Since 2002 Bulgaria starts work for designation of Natura 2000 sites for protection of the wild species. The work starts with a project with the financial support from Danish government. After the project completion a new project was started with funding by the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria.

Part of those projects included determination of suitable sites for amphibians and reptiles. 17 sites especially for reptiles have been designated during the project till now. For several others sites the reptile and amphibian species are as part of the fauna that is represented there. The final number of special protected areas under Natura 2000 will be known after the approval of the national list of sites by European Commission. The Natura 2000 sites have to be presented to the European Commission at the time of accession of Bulgaria to EU.

In 2004 starts a project for elaboration of National Biodiversity Monitoring System (NBMS). The project was financed by PSO Pre- accession Programme of the EVD Agency in the Ministry of Economy of Nederland. The project has finished in 2006. 21 species (included 13 if high priority) of amphibian and reptiles were proposed to be monitored as result of the project. The management of the NBMS will be carried out by Executive Agency of Environment and Water under the Ministry of Environment and Water.

According to the Red Data Book published in 1985 a number of 4 species are considered to be rare, 8 species are endangered and 2 species are extinct (Table 1). For determination of the present status of the species in 2004 a contract for elaboration of new Red Data Book was signed between the Ministry of Environment and Water and Central Laboratory of General Ecology of Bulgarian academy of Science. The project has to be completed in 3 years period.

In 2005 an Action Plan on conservation of tortoises in Bulgaria (2005-2014) was approved by the Minister of Environment and Water. The Bulgarian version of the Action Plan was published in internet. The English version is under development.

The main treads for tortoises in Bulgaria is collection of tortoises for food and pet market.

**Table 1**

| SPECIES | | Red Data Book (1985) | IUCN | Biodiversity Act 2002 | BERN CONVENTION | DIR 92/43 EEC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMPHIBIA** | | | | | | |
| **Caudata** | | | | | | |
| **Salamandridae** | | | | | | |
| Fire salamander | Salamandra salamandra | | | III | App. III | App. II (aurore) |
| Alpine newt | Triturus alpestris | R | | III | App. III | |
| Danube crested newt | Triturus dobrogicus | | | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Crested newt | Triturus karelinii | | | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Common newt | Triturus vulgaris | | | III | App. III | |
| **Anura** | | | | | | |
| **Dissoglosidae** | | | | | | |
| Red-bellied toad | Bombina bombina | | | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Yellow-bellied toad | Bombina variegata | | | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| **Pelobatidae** | | | | | | |
| Common spadefoot toad | Pelobates fuscus | | | III | App. II | App. II (insubricus), App. IV |
| Eastern spadefoot toad | Pelobates syriacus balcanicus | EN | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| **Bufonidae** | | | | | | |
| Green toad | Bufo viridis | | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Common toad | Bufo bufo | | | III | App. III | |
| **Hylidae** | | | | | | |
| Common tree frog | Hyla arborea | | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| **Ranidae** | | | | | | |
| Spring frog | Rana dalmatina | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Stream frog | Rana graeca | | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Marsh frog | Rana ridibunda | | | IV | App. III | App. V |
| Common frog | Rana temporaria | | | IV | App. III | App. V |
| Edible frog | Rana esculenta | | | IV | App. III | App. V |
| **REPTILIA** | | | | | | |
| **Testudinata** | | | | | | |
| **Cheloniidae** | | | | | | |
| Green turtle | Chelonia mydas | | | | | |
| Loggerhead turtle | Caretta caretta | | EN | | | |
| **Testudinidae** | | | | | | |
| Hermann`s tortoise | Testudo hermanni | | LR | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Greek tortoise | Testudo graeca | | VU | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| **Emydidae** | | | | | | |
| Swamp turtle | Emys orbicularis | | LR | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Balkan terrapin | Mauremys rivulata | EN | | III | App. II | App.e II, App. IV |
| **Sauria** | | | | | | |
| Slow worm | Anguis fragilis | | | III | App. III | |
| European gecko | Mediodactylus kotschyi | | | III | App. II | |
| Snake-eyed lizard | Ophisops elegans | O.e. ehrenbergi i - R | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Sand lizard | Lacerta agilis | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Green lizard | Lacerta viridis | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Three-lined lizard | Lacerta trilineata | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Viviparous lizard | Zootoca vivipara | | | III | App. III | |
| Meadow lizard | Darevskia praticola | | | | App. III | |
| Erhard's wall lizard | Podarcis erhardi | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Common wall lizard | Podarcis muralis | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Balkan wall (Crimean) lizard | Podarcis taurica | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| European glass lizard | Ophisaurus apodus | O. apodus thracicus - EN | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Snake-eyed skink | Ablepharus kitaibeli | | | | App. II | App. IV |

| **Ophidia** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Typhlopidae** | | | | | | |
| Worm snake | Typhlops vermicularis | R | | III | App. III | |
| **Boidae** | | | | | | |
| Sand boa | Eryx jaculus turcicus | EN | | III | App. III | App. IV |
| **Colubridae** | | | | | | |
| Black-necked snake | Platyceps collaris | EN | | III | App. III | |
| Dahl's whip snake | Platyceps najadum | | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Large whip snake | Dolichophis caspius | | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Leopard snake | Zamenis situla | EN | DD | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Blotched snake | Elaphe sauromates | | | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |
| Western four-lined snake | Elaphe quatuorlineata | EN | | III | App. II | App.e II, App. IV |
| Aesculapian snake | Zamenis longissimus | EN | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Smooth snake | Coronella austriaca | | | III | App. II | |
| Cat snake | Telescopus fallax | R | | III | App. II | App. IV |
| Montpellier snake | Malpolon monspessulanus | | | III | App. III | |
| Grass snake | Natrix natrix | | | | App. III | |
| Diced snake | Natrix tessellata | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| **Viperidae** | | | | | | |
| Sand viper | Vipera ammodytes | | | | App. II | App. IV |
| Juraviper | Vipera aspis | Ex | | | App. III | |
| Adder | Vipera berus | | | | App. III | |
| Orsini's viper | Vipera ursinii | Ex | EN | III | App. II | App. II, App. IV |

**EX –** Extinct, **EN –** Endangered**, R-**Rare**, VU-** Vulnerable**, LR –** Lower risk**, DD –**Data deficiency

# II. CROATIA / CROATIE

## Informal National Report

*Maja Gluhaković,* State Institute for Nature Protection, Zagreb
*Eduard Kletečki*, Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb

### Biological Diversity

Up to this day, 19 amphibian species (Amphibia) and 39 reptile species (Reptilia) have been recorded in Croatia. Among the amphibians 7 belong to the salamanders and newts (Urodela) and 12 to the toads and frogs (Anura). Among the reptiles there are 18 species of lizards (Sauria), 16 snake species (Serpentes) and 5 terrapin, tortoise and turtle species (Testudinata). While the number of amphibians is relatively low in comparison with some areas of the Western and Central Europe, the number of reptiles is high, as characteristic of the areas close to the Mediterranean Sea.

*Level of threat*

According to the *Red Book of Amphibians and Reptiles of Croatia* (*in print*), of the total of 58 amphibian and reptile species, 5 are threatened (2 are categorized as Critically Endangered, 2 as Endangered, and 1 as Vulnerable), 6 are Data Deficient (possibly threatened) and 7 fall into the Near Threatened group of species (12%). Five species (9%) fall into the group whose subspecies or parts of populations are Endangered or Near Threatened. 35 species are so far considered as Least Concern (60%). This means that 19% of species are *de facto* threatened (CR, EN, VU, DD), but for a half there is inadequate information to make the assessment of the IUCN category of threat.

*Causes of threat*

The causes of threat posed to threatened taxa (CR, EN, VU), Data Deficient (DD) and those Near Threatened (NT) may generally be attributed to changes that occurred in the traditional environmental management, to the introduction of alien species, poaching and water pollution.

*Legal protection*

All croatian amphibians and reptiles are protected by the *Nature Protection Act* (Official Gazette, 70/05).

By the *Ordinance on proclamation of wild taxa protected and strictly protected* (Official Gazette, 7/06) 37 reptile and 15 amphibian taxa are strictly protected and 6 reptile and 6 amphibian taxa are protected.

Complete list of protected and strictly protected taxa can be found at:

- http://www.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeno/2006/0157A.htm (strictly protected)
- http://www.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeno/2006/0157C.htm (protected).

The survival of the majority of threatened amphibian and reptile species calls for the protection of habitats crucially important in their life cycle. This is regulated by the *Ordinance on conservation of threatened and rare habitat types* (Official Gazette 7/06) which was adopted in January 2006. Protection of threatened and rare habitats is also represented by numerous expert-papers which are used for issuing requirements and measures for nature protection which are then implemented in various management plans (e.g. forest-management plans, hunting-management plans, water-management plans) and also physical plans.

*Current situation*

According to the *Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Republic of Croatia* (Official Gazette 81/99), there are several priority action plans that need to be fulfilled as soon as possible:

- Identification of habitats and nesting sites for loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta,*
- Identification of remaining habitats and localities of the *Vipera ursinii* species complex,
- Research of characteristics and level of threat of green lizards and lizards on islands,
- Action plan for inventarisation and protection of the Italian frog *Rana latastei,*
- Project for identification, inventarisation and status of the Eastern Mediterranean terrapin *Mauremys rivulata* including start of first conservation measures.

The latter two plans are already being conducted by the State Institute for Nature Protection and Croatian Herpetological Society «Hyla». Currently, two pools in Gornji Majkovi, near Dubrovnik, are in process of designation as the first herpetological reserve in Croatia. The pools are one of the last locations in Croatia where *Mauremys rivulata* can be found.

**Dinaric Alps Rare Habitats and Species Conservation Project in Croatia** (http://www.hpm.hr/krs/)

From the year 2003 until the year 2006, within the "Dinaric Alps Rare Habitats and Species Conservation Project in Croatia" (financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality, and of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), amphibian and reptile species were studied, amongst other animal groups, on five pilot areas (PA):

1. **Velika Kapela Mts.** with several small karst fields: Ličko polje, Matić poljana, Jasenačko polje, Krakar polje, Drežničko polje, Crnačko polje and Stajničko polje. This area has typical habitats for the north-western part of the Croatian Dinaric Alps,
2. **Plješevica Mts.** with Koreničko polje, Krbavica polje, Krbava polje, Podlapačko polje, Mutilić polje and Lapačko polje. Plješevica Mts. (highest peak Ozeblin with 1.647 m a.s.l.),
3. **Dinara Mts.** (Dinara Mt., Troglav Mt. and Kamešnica Mt.) with Paško polje, Hrvatačko polje and Sinjsko polje,
4. **Biokovo Mt.** with Polje Jezero (Dušina polje, Vrgoračko polje),
5. **Sniježnica Mt.** with Konavosko polje under its southern foothills.

These surveys were conducted by the specialists from the Croatian Natural History Museum and Croatian Herpetological Society «Hyla». The results are as follows:

**Reptiles**

From 30 species of reptiles registered in Dinaric Alps, the number of species in PA's is between 8 species in continetal part to 27 species on the southern slopes of mountains and on karst fields with Mediterranean influence. The following 6 species are listed on Annex 2 of the Habitats Directive: *Testudo hermanni, Emys orbicularis, Mauremys caspica (= M. rivulata), Elaphe quatuorlineata, Elaphe situla (= Zamenis situla)* and *Vipera ursinii*. Listed on Annex 4 are, as additional, 17 species: *Algyroides nigropunctatus, Lacerta agilis, Lacerta horvathi (= Iberolacerta horvathi), Lacerta trilineata, Lacerta viridis (= L. v. bilineata), Podarcis melisellensis, Podarcis muralis, Podarcis sicula, Ophisaurus apodus (= Pseudopus apus), Coluber laurenti (= Hierophis gemonensis), Coluber najadum (= Platyceps najadum), Coluber viridiflavus, Coronella austriaca, Elaphe longissima (=Zamenis longissimus), Natrix tessellata, Telescopus fallax* and *Vipera ammodytes*.

The most systematic surveys were conducted on Dinara Mt., Troglav Mt. and Kamešnica Mt. (all PA 3.). For the first time we completed the list of reptiles from this mountain chain with 2 terrapins and tortoises, 8 lizards and 9 snakes, at all 19 reptiles. Of Mediterranean snakes only *Hierophis gemonensis* and *Malpolon monspessulanum* were found, along Cetina valley southern slopes. The most interesting results are new sites for *Algyroides nigropunctatus* and *Lacerta oxycephala* (one larger site in rocky canyon, and other on artificial rocky walls) isolated from the rest of the distribution area, and mapped sites of *Vipera ursinii macrops*. Karst meadow viper was found on one site in the area of Dinara peak (1.551 m a.s.l.), on one site near the border with Bosnia and Hercegovina on Troglav Mt. (1.570 m a.s.l.), and on one site near the border with Bosnia and Hercegovina on Kamešnica Mt. (1.253 m a.s.l.). The majority of registered sites (9 at all) are actually

in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Probably the most broader distribution area is on Croatian side around Dinara peak. The majority of findings was over 1.500 m a.s.l., all in Alpine and Subalpine meadows with grass tussocs. Interesting is that *Vipera berus bosniensis*, from literature very common in the past, was not found, probably restricted to northern slopes only. The most common lizard in the karst meadow viper habitats was *Lacerta agilis*. On Biokovo Mts. 8 lizard species (6 listed on Habitats Directive Annexes and *Lacerta mosorensis* and *L. oxycephala*) and 9 snake species were registered. On Sniježnica Mts. 8 reptiles were registered, 7 listed on Annexes of the Habitats Directive and *Lacerta oxycephala*.

**Amphibians**

From 14 species of amphibians noted for Croatian part of Dinaric Alps, in the western part 12 species are common, but in the eastern part only 6 species. On Annex 2 of the Habitats Directive *Triturus carnifex, Proteus anguinus* and *Bombina variegata* are listed, and on Annex 4 are as additional *Salamandra atra, Rana dalmatina, Hyla arborea* and *Bufo viridis*.

Following species are known, from literature, on the Kapela Mt.: *Salamandra atra, S. salamandra, Triturus cristatus, T. alpestris, T. vulgaris, Proteus anguinus, Bombina variegata, Bufo bufo, B. viridis, Hyla arborea, Rana dalmatina* and *R. temporaria*. Plješevica Mt. probably has the same amphibian fauna. In PA 1. and PA 2. we could not confirm presence of *Triturus carnifex* in some old known sites. For Dinaric cave salamander (*Proteus anguinus*) we noted one new finding site, near Otok village (PA 3.) in underwater spring situated in one canal (previous tributary creek) on the left bank of Cetina river. For Dinara Mt. 8 species were registered for the first time, with good sketches of altitude distribution. Only *Triturus alpestris*, *Bufo viridis* and *Rana dalmatina* were found in higher altitudes. On Dinara Mt. (PA 3.) 6 species were registered (*Salamandra salamandra, Triturus alpestris, Bufo viridis, Bufo bufo, Hyla arborea* and *Rana dalmatina*), on Biokovo Mt. only three species (*Salamandra salamandra, Triturus vulgaris, Bufo viridis*), and on Sniježnica Mt. four species (*Triturus vulgaris, Bufo viridis, Hyla arborea, Rana ridibunda*).

# III. CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

## Czech Republic – informal national report

***Petr Roth, Ministry of Environment, Czech Republic***

Since the last meeting of the group in 2003, Czech Republic became EU Member State (as of May 1, 2004). Annex IV of the Habitats Directive was fully transposed, i.e., all species listed here became strictly protected.. However, compared to the previous situation nothing has changed as all the species of amphibians and reptiles listed in respective annex were protected species within the Czech Republic also before accession.

On request of the Czech Republic, both Annex II and Annex IV were amended by adding *Triturus montandoni.* It became strictly protected species and, at the same time, some Sites of Community Importance have been proposed for its protection at the territory of the Czech Republic.

As a EU-Member State, Czech Republic is obliged to pass the report on surveillance of all Annex II, IV and V species of the Habitats Directive to the European Commission within 6-years-intervals, starting in 2007. For that purpose, extensive monitoring system is in preparation. All herpetofauna species listed in the respective annexes will be monitored and the data will become publicly available.

For amphibians and reptiles, new Red List is available since 2003:

Zavadil V. & Moravec J. 2003: Červený seznam obojživelníků a plazů České republiky. Příroda, Praha, 22: 83-93 (Redlist of amphibians a nd reptiles of the Czech Republic.)

In 2005, research on isolated population of *Elaphe longissima* near Karlovy Vary was started within the framework of Ph.D. thesis. 159 different individuals of Aesculapian snake were found at the territory about 20 sqkm along the River Ohře canyon. The research will be continuing also in coming years. The population is sustainable, bound to anthropogenic landscape, majority of local people supports and protects it. Along the valley, class I state road I/13 is running; it causes relatively high mortality in juvenile snakes but no mortality in adults; it seems, therefore, that the snakes learn to use underpasses under the road which is unusual from the ethological point of view.

For decades there have been plans to reconstruct the I/13. Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic together with Regional Office in Karlovy Vary and Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic started to cooperate with Directorate of Roads and Highways, investor of the future new road, and within the EIA process started to seek for the most suitable option of the new road. It seems that when the design of the project will be well-done and special requirements regarding the way of construction will be kept it will be possible to produce an „ecologically sound construction“ which could lead to at least maintaining the population in the good conservation status.

As *Elaphe longissima* near Karlovy Vary represents an open file at the Standing Committee, short report on the ongoing activities will be presented during its next meeting in November 2006.

# IV. ESTONIA / ESTONIE

## Amphibian and reptile conservation 2003-2005
## National Report of Estonia

**Authority concerned:**
**Ministry of the Environment**
**Nature Conservation Department**
**Narva Road 7A**
**15172 Tallinn / Estonia**

**Compiled by:**
**Riinu Rannap**
**Senior officer of species protection**
**Tel: +372 62 62 889. Fax: +372 62 62 901. E-mail: riinu.rannap@envir.ee**

### 1. Status of amphibians and reptiles

In Estonia there are 11 species of amphibians and 5 species of reptiles. All amphibian and reptile species, except *Rana ridibunda* are native. *Rana ridibunda* was introduced in 1925 to Estonia.

Eight amphibian species: *Triturus vulgaris, Bufo bufo, Rana temporaria, Rana arvalis, Rana esculenta, Rana lessonae* and four reptile species: *Lacerta vivipara, Anguis fragilis, Natrix natrix* and *Vipera berus* are numerous and widespread. During the last five years the populations of *Bufo bufo, Rana esculenta* and *Rana lessonae* have been increased and the distribution range of those species enlarged.

One amphibian species – *Bufo viridis* - is close to extinction in Estonia. Today there are some single specimens left, but no single viable populations. The main threat towards this species is degradation of suitable habitats and breeding ponds. *Bufo viridis* used to occur on coastal meadows and pastures of Peipsi Lake. Due to increased management (grazing, mowing) the habitat of *Bufo viridis* is overgrown with reed and scrub.

*Bufo calamita* is vulnerable species, which occur in the northeastern border of its distribution range in Estonia. *Bufo calamita* is found only in the West coast and western islands of Estonia. The main threat for this species is overgrowing of breeding and foraging habitats – Baltic coastal meadows. Today the species is found mainly (80% of the total population) in secondary habitats: sand and gravel quarries and abandoned fishponds.

*Pelobates fuscus* and *Triturus cristatus* are rare and threatened species in Estonia. They are found mainly in South and Southeast Estonia. Only some localities are known in the Central and Northeastern part of Estonia. The populations of *Pelobates fuscus* and *Triturus cristatus* have declined mainly due to the lack of suitable breeding ponds and destruction of meta-populations.

*Lacerta agilis* is the only threatened reptile species, which occurs dispersedly all over the mainland of Estonia and on Kihnu Island. The species used to inhabit sandy areas, which are forested or becoming overgrown with scrub nowadays. At present there are quite a few isolated populations left in Estonia. The specie is found mainly in secondary habitats, such as sand quarries.

### 2. Legislation

According to the Nature Conservation Act (2004) all amphibian and reptile species are protected in Estonia (Table 1).

*Bufo viridis* and *Bufo calamita* as the most rare and vulnerable species belong in the protection category I.

All known habitats of species of Protection Category I will be ensured by designation of protected areas, special conservation areas or species protection sites.

*Pelobates fuscus, Triturus cristatus* and *Lacerta agilis* belong in the protection category II and all the rest of amphibian and reptile species in the category III.

At least 50% of known habitats of species of Protection Category II and at least 10% of known habitats of species of Protection Category III will be ensured by designation.

Species of Protection Categories shall be listed pursuant to the Act in accordance with the relevant procedure established by the Government of Estonia.

Taking, keeping and killing of protected animal species disturbing the species to an extent that sets the animals in danger, and making transactions with the species, is prohibited. Destroying of their permanent habitats or causing damage to these to an extent which sets the preservation of the species at the concerned site in danger, is prohibited.

Table 1 Amphibian and reptile species in Estonia

| | **The Bern Convention** | **EU Habitats Directive** | **IUCN Red Data List** | **Protection Status in Estonia** | **Comments** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMPHIBIA** | | | | | |
| ***Caudata*** | | | | | |
| *Triturus vulgaris* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Triturus cristatus* | **II** | **II; IV** | CD | **II** | **Vulnerable** |
| ***Anura*** | | | | | |
| *Bufo bufo* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Bufo calamita* | **I** | **IV** | | **I** | **Threatened** |
| *Bufo viridis* | **I** | **IV** | | **I** | **Nearly extinct** |
| *Pelobates fuscus* | **II** | **IV** | | **II** | **Vulnerable** |
| *Rana arvalis* | **II** | **IV** | | **III** | |
| *Rana temporaria* | **III** | **V** | | **III** | |
| *Rana esculenta* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Rana ridibunda* | **III** | **V** | | **III** | **Alien species** |
| **REPTILIA** | | | | | |
| ***Squamata*** | | | | | |
| *Anguis fragilis* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Lacerta vivipara* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Lacerta agilis* | **II** | **IV** | | **II** | **Threatened** |
| *Natrix natrix* | **III** | | | **III** | |
| *Vipera berus* | **III** | | | **III** | |

## 3. Monitoring

The amphibian and reptile's monitoring program has been carried out since 1994 in frame of the Biodiversity Sub-Program of the Estonian National Environmental Monitoring Program. The amphibian and reptile monitoring i carried out annually, since 2005 in 18 monitoring stations. The monitoring stations are located all over Estonia, covering the distribution ranges of all reptile and amphibian species.

## 4. Species protection

To maintain and conserve the aquatic and terrestrial habitats of *Triturus cristatus* 10 new protected areas have been designated in 2004. Five new sites have been taken under the protection for *Bufo calamita* and one site for *Lacerta agilis*.

In order to protect threatened amphibian species in Estonia and to maintain and restore their habitats, several projects have been carried out in national and international level:

1. LIFE-Nature project "Boreal Baltic Coastal Meadow Preservation in Estonia" (2001-2004). The aim of the project was to restore the coastal meadow habitat for *Bufo calamita* and secure the population of this species.
2. LIFE-Nature project "Restoration and Management of Häädemeeste Wetland Complex" (2001-2004). In frame of this projects habitat restoration for *Lacerta agilis* and *Bufo calamita* will take place.

3. LIFE-Nature project "Protection of *Triturus cristatus* in Eastern Baltic Region" (2004-2008).
4. LIFE-Nature project "Rehabilitation of Baltic Coastal Lagoon Habitat Complex". The target species of this project are *Bufo calamita* and *Bufo viridis.*

## 5. Achievements in 2003-2005

*National action plans for species:*

- The national action plan for *Bufo calamita* (2004-2008) has been compiled and approved by the Minister of the Environment. The action plan is under the implementation.
- The national action plan for *Triturus cristatus* is under the development and will be compiled by the end of 2006.

*Habitat restoration:*

- 101 breeding ponds for *Triturus cristatus* and *Pelobates fuscus* as well as 30 breeding ponds for *Bufo calamita* have been restored and new ponds created.
- The sand dunes restoration for *Lacerta agilis*, in aim to create open areas, for this species is in process since 2003.
- Additional mowing and grazing of terrestrial habitat of *Bufo calamita*, *Pelobates fuscus* and *Triturus cristatus.*
- Re-introduction of *Bufo calamita* tadpoles to restored coastal meadows has been carried out since 2000. The aim of this action is to create 10 reserve populations for existing populations.

*Increasing of public awareness:*

- Since 2003 three international educational-scientific workshops on amphibians have been carried out in different regions of Estonia. The aim of those international workshops is to provide the participants both practical experience and discussions concerning the threats towards the species and possibilities to maintain and restore the habitats. As we have a lack of herpetologists in Estonia this type of international cooperation has provided the opportunity to make large scale inventories, collect new data on specie distribution as well as to find solutions for species protection and habitat management by putting one another's knowledge and existing experiences into use.
- Seven work camps for amphibians' habitat restoration and management have been carried out in protected areas. The work camps are important not only from the point of view of work that gets done, but also in terms of nature education and promotion of awareness. In the course of the camps, the participants will receive information on the ecology, habitat demands and endangering factors of amphibians.
- Five guided tours for local people, landowners and schoolchildren were carried out. Local site managers and amphibian experts guided the tours. This kind of practical fieldwork is the best way to demonstrate to the local people and children the demands of amphibians and the features of a breeding pond with good conditions. During the tours the participants experience the differences between the ponds in different conditions.
- A field guide of Estonian amphibians was published in 2004.
- A folder "The Protection of Great Crested Newt" was published in five languages (Estonian, English, Danish, Finnish and Russian) in 2004-2005.

# V. FRANCE / FRANCE

CONSERVATION DES AMPHIBIENS ET DES REPTILES EN FRANCE
SITUATION EN 2006

## 1) Etat de conservation des espèces et actions en cours :

La deuxième phase de l'inventaire des amphibiens et reptiles de France (l'un des objectifs du plan National d'action) s'est terminée en 2005. Un atlas est en cours de rédaction. Ce travail a permis de mettre à jour nos connaissances sur l'état de conservation des espèces sur le territoire métropolitain.

Les prospections les plus récentes recensent 35 espèces d'amphibiens autochtones et 5 allochtones, et de 38 espèces de reptiles autochtones et 3 allochtones sur le territoire métropolitain. Elles permettent de mieux appréhender l'état de conservation de l'herpétofaune française, même si ces informations doivent encore être documentées pour certaines espèces.

Parmi les amphibiens autochtones, on peut estimer qu'environ un quart des espèces sont en voie de régression plus ou moins prononcée (*Triturus cristatus*, *Bombina variegata*…). Les rares espèces montrant une extension récente d'aire de répartition (*Rana ridibunda*…) ont en fait progressé à la suite d'introductions et se comportent ainsi en espèces invasives. Environ 1/7$^{e}$ des espèces ont des aires de répartitions restreintes en France, voire au niveau mondial (*Salamandra lanzai*) et sont vulnérables. Deux d'entre elles (*Pelobates fuscus* et *Rana arvalis*) sont par ailleurs en régression très marquées : elles sont particulièrement menacées dans notre pays. Parmi les grands enjeux de conservation auxquels la France doit faire face, la lutte contre les populations d'espèces envahissantes d'amphibiens a pris une importance particulière ces dernières années. Deux espèces se révèlent très préoccupantes : *Rana catesbeiana* et *Xenopus laevis*. Par ailleurs, les principaux facteurs favorisant la régression des amphibiens, à savoir l'altération des zones humides par destruction directe ou abaissement des nappes phréatiques, l'influence de la modernisation d'une agriculture désormais grande consommatrice d'herbicides et d'insecticides, ainsi que la fragmentation des habitats, ne sont toujours pas maîtrisés. L'avenir de toutes les espèces d'amphibiens n'est donc pas assuré.

A part quelques espèces emblématiques, les reptiles français ont, dans leur ensemble, suscité moins d'inquiétudes que les amphibiens. Pourtant, les récents inventaires montrent que ceux-ci régressent dans les mêmes proportions (1 espèce autochtone sur 4 environ). Cette régression se traduit plus souvent par des baisses d'effectifs que par des réductions d'aires de répartition, ce qui explique peut-être qu'elle est plus difficile à mettre en évidence. Le déclin de *Lacerta lepida* est particulièrement critique. Cette espèce a récemment disparu de plusieurs îles méditerranéennes et est au seuil de l'extinction dans la plaine de la Crau. Elle mériterait un plan d'action national. Par contre, une espèce semble progresser naturellement (c'est-à-dire sans introduction) : *Hierophis viridiflavus*. Le cas de *Vipera aspis* est plus complexe. Cette vipère est en extension dans le sud de la France et elle commence à envahir les biotopes de *Vipera ursinii* alors qu'elle régresse à l'ouest suite à la destruction du bocage. Cinq espèces ont des aires de répartition restreintes au niveau national ou au niveau mondial, (*Iberolacerta* sp. en particulier). Le problème des espèces invasives est moins crucial que pour les amphibiens. Le devenir des nombreuses tortues de Floride (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) lâchées dans le milieu naturel reste cependant préoccupant. Plusieurs cas de reproduction ont été signalés ces dernières années dans la nature et une naturalisation durable de l'espèce n'est pas à exclure.

Pour se qui concerne les tortues marines, la France applique dans ses eaux territoriales méditerranéennes le plan d'action Tortue marine de la Convention de Barcelone. Elle dispose d'un réseau actif d'observateurs et de soin en Méditerranée et Atlantique françaises.

Pour ce qui concerne plus particulièrement les espèces pour lesquelles des plans européens d'Action ont été ou doivent être rédigés dans le cadre de la Convention de Berne, les éléments suivants peuvent être rappelés :

## Amphibiens

Le complexe *Triturus cristatus*. Le Triton crêté (*Triturus cristatus*) est en régression. La disparition de plusieurs populations a été constatée ces dernières années. La raréfaction des habitats favorables en est la principale cause. Cette espèce est protégée en France et est prise en compte dans le plan national d'Action sur les Amphibiens et Reptiles. Le Triton crêté italien (*Triturus carnifex*) est une espèce introduite en France et ne nécessite pas de plan d'Action sur le territoire national. Bien que le statut des deux populations françaises ne soit pas actuellement connu, il est probable qu'elles régresseront comme c'est le cas des populations suisses adjacentes.

*Rana lessonae.* Le statut de conservation de cette espèce n'est pas toujours facile à déterminer car elle fait l'objet de confusions avec les autres espèces du sous-genre *Pelophylax*. Toutefois, une nette régression se dessine dans l'ouest de la France, cette espèce étant progressivement remplacée par *Rana ridibunda*. *Rana lessonae* est protégée en France mais subit probablement des prélèvements accidentels suite à des confusions avec *Rana* kl. *esculenta*, dont la pêche, bien que fortement réglementée, est autorisée une partie de l'année.

## Reptiles

*Testudo hermanni hermanni* : Les deux populations françaises (Corse et Var) ne sont pas dans le même état de conservation. La population corse occupe une aire de répartition étendue bien que morcelée. L'espèce n'y est pas actuellement menacée. Toutefois, ses habitats se dégradent et son état de conservation pourrait devenir défavorable si cette tendance perdure. La population varoise est par contre extrêmement menacée. La pression d'urbanisation qui sévit dans la région, spécialement dans son noyau le plus important de la plaine et du massif des Maurs, est la cause principale de ce mauvais état de conservation. S'ajoutent à cela divers projets d'aménagements, la plantation de vignes ou l'augmentation de la fréquence des incendies. Bien que l'espèce soit protégée, ses habitats continuent donc de se dégrader. Un plan d'Action national a été préparé. Il sera finalisé dès qu'il sera possible de faire la synthèse des protections administratives actuellement en cours d'installation. Ainsi, des espaces protégés ont été créés ainsi qu'un site Natura 2000. Suite à une plainte de la Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature auprès du Secrétariat de la convention de Berne, une visite des lieux a été opérée par un expert indépendant, M. Guy Berthoud. Il en a résulté un rapport préconisant des pistes de réflexions pour une gestion intégrée de la population de la plaine et du massif des Maures. L'un des enjeux majeurs est d'éviter au maximum la fragmentation de cette population sans empêcher tout aménagement. L'Etat français est motivé pour mettre en œuvre une politique dynamique de conservation de l'espèce.

*Lacerta agilis* : L'essentiel de l'aire de répartition française est occupée par *Lacerta agilis agilis*. Sa limite sud reste à préciser car l'espèce est discrète mais elle est absente de la région méditerranéenne et n'atteint donc pas les Pyrénées. Cette sous-espèce est en régression dans le nord et l'ouest de son aire, en particulier à cause de la disparition des landes à bruyère et des tourbières. La sous-espèce *Lacerta agilis garzoni* est totalement isolée dans les Pyrénées. Elle constitue une population de petite taille et aux effectifs faibles, semble-t-il. Sa situation est donc préoccupante. L'espèce est protégée par la loi française et est prise en compte par le plan National d'action.

*Lacerta bilineata* : Cette espèce est le représentant français du complexe *Lacerta viridis*. Bien qu'elle subisse des régressions locales sous l'effet en particulier de l'urbanisation et de l'intensification des pratiques agricoles, elle ne paraît pas menacée. Cette espèce est protégée en France.

*Zamenis longissimus* : La Couleuvre d'Esculape a une répartition française qui semble morcelée mais sa discrétion la rend difficile à détecter. Pour les mêmes raisons, il est difficile de déceler une tendance à la régression ou à l'expansion. L'espèce n'a pas été récemment confirmée dans des stations où elle était connue mais il n'est pas prouvé qu'elle y en ait disparu. Malgré tout, cette espèce est menacée sur l'ensemble de son aire de distribution à cause de la destruction de ses habitats et d'une forte mortalité routière. Par ailleurs, bien que protégée depuis 1979, elle est toujours tuée. La protection des Ophidiens reste difficile en France à cause des préjugés et croyances qui perdurent. Elle l'est d'autant plus pour cette espèce anthropophile. Tout plan d'Action sur cette espèce devrait

donc prévoir des actions de sensibilisation envers le grand public, et plus spécialement les agriculteurs.

*Vipera ursinii* : Suite aux prospections récentes, douze stations sont connues avec certitude. Deux autres stations sont à confirmer et une station est présumée disparue. Selon le mode de calcul utilisé, l'ensemble des populations françaises a été estimé entre 20,000 et 60,000 individus. La situation est contrastée d'une station à une autre, certaines gardant une bonne capacité d'accueil de l'espèce, d'autres se dégradant peu à peu (cas de la station du mont Ventoux) avec pour conséquence un déclin des effectifs. L'espèce bénéficie d'une protection nationale. Le plan d'Action national, réactivé en 2005, a été officiellement adopté au début de l'année 2006. Un programme Life sur cette espèce vient également d'être sélectionné et cofinancé par l'Union européenne. Si toutes les mesures préconisées par ces deux outils sont mises en œuvre, on peut espérer que l'espèce sera restaurée en France dans un état de conservation favorable dans un proche avenir. Par contre, sur le long terme, les effets du réchauffement climatique pourraient avoir des répercutions extrêmement négatives sur l'espèce.

## 2) Les actions futures :

Diverses initiatives nationales visant à favoriser la connaissance et la conservation des amphibiens et reptiles de France sont programmées. Elles s'adressent à l'ensemble des espèces ou à des espèces particulières. Quelques une sont mentionnées ci-dessous.

- Plans Nationaux d'actions

  *Plan National d'action Amphibiens Reptiles*. L'un des objectifs de ce plan devrait être atteint courant 2007 avec la parution d'un nouvel atlas des amphibiens et reptiles de France métropolitaine.

  *Plan de restauration de la Vipère d'Orsini*. Ce plan national, adopté en 2006, poursuivra sa mise en œuvre.

  *Plan de restauration de la Tortue d'Hermann.* Ce plan national est rédigé mais n'a pas encore été adopté. Il pourrait être mis à jour et finalisé prochainement pour tenir compte des récentes évolutions relatives à la conservation de cette espèce dans la plaine des Maures.

  *Nouveaux plans d'Action nationaux*. De nouveaux plans d'Action nationaux ciblés sur des espèces pourraient voir le jour dans les années à venir. Une démarche pour sélectionner ces espèces est en cours.

- Programme Life

  *Programme Life Vipère d'Orsini.* Ce programme, sélectionné en 2006, sera mis en œuvre. Dans ce cadre, une réunion internationale sur la conservation de cette espèce est prévue en 2007.

- Suivi Temporel des Amphibiens Communs (STAC).

  Le Muséum National d'Histoire Naturel se propose de mettre en œuvre un programme de monitoring d'espèces communes d'amphibiens anours basé sur des écoutes nocturnes. Le protocole est en cours de test.

- Projets de la commission de Conservation de la Société Herpétologique de France

  En relation avec d'autres organismes, la commission de Conservation de la SHF se propose d'animer divers travaux faisant suite à l'inventaire des amphibiens et reptiles de France.

  *Mise à jour de la liste rouge nationale*. La liste rouge national, établie en 1994, est maintenant obsolète. La commission de Conservation de la SHF se propose de la mettre à jour en s'inspirant du protocole IUCN de 2001 (version 3.1.).

  *Détermination des sites remarquables pour la conservation des amphibiens et reptiles de France métropolitaine*. La commission de Conservation de la SHF se propose, en se basant sur le programme européen Important Herpetofaunal Areas in Europe (IHA), de déterminer les sites particulièrement importants pour la conservation des amphibiens et reptiles, soit en en termes quantitatifs (grande richesse spécifique), soit en termes qualitatifs (présence d'espèces menacées et /ou endémiques).

*Publication d'un ouvrage sur la conservation des amphibiens et reptiles en France métropolitaine*. Une enquête sur les actions de conservation actuellement menées en France va prochainement être lancée. Les résultats de cette enquête feront l'objet d'une publication.

Rédaction : Patrick HAFFNER

Avec la contribution de Jean LESCURE, Vincent BENTATA, Jacques FRETEY, Jean-Pierre VACHER, Olivier LOURDAIS et Arnaud LYET.

# VI. LATVIA / LETTONIE

## National Report on Amphibians and Reptiles Conservation in Latvia

There are thirteen amphibian and seven reptile species in Latvia. All the species are mentioned in the Appendices II or III (Table 1) of Bern convention. Rare species are protected by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations **"**Lists of Specially Protected and Limitedly Exploitable Specially Protected Species" Nr. 396/14.11.2000. (Table 1). For three species (*Bombina bombina, Bufo calamita* and *Triturus cristatus* (added with regulation amendments 31.05.2005.), if necessary, it is possible to make microreserves. It is provided by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations (Nr. 45/ 30.01.2001) "On establishing, protection and management of microreserves".

**Table 1 - Status of Amphibian and Reptile Species of Latvia**

| Species | Bern Convention | EU Habitats Directive | Situation in Latvia | Cabinet of Ministers Regulations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Amphibia* | | | | |
| *Triturus vulgaris* (L.) | III | | Common | |
| *Triturus cristatus* (Laur.) | II | HD II; IV | Rare | Specially protected species |
| *Bufo calamita* Laur. | II | HD IV | Rare | Specially protected species |
| *Bufo bufo* (L.) | III | | Very common | |
| *Bufo viridis* Laur. | II | HD IV | Comparatively rare | Specially protected species |
| *Bombina bombina* (L.) | II | HD II; IV | Very rare | Specially protected species |
| *Hyla arborea* (L.) | II | HD IV | Rare, reintroduced | Specially protected species |
| *Pelobates fuscus* (Laur.) | II | HD IV | Rare | Specially protected species |
| *Rana ridibunda* Pall. | III | HD V | Rare, introduced? | |
| *Rana esculenta* L. | III | HD V | Common | |
| *Rana lessonae* Camerano | III | HD IV | Common | |
| *Rana arvalis* Nilsson | II | HD IV | Comparatively rare | |
| *Rana temporaria* L. | III | HD V | Very common | |
| **Reptilia** | | | | |
| *Emys orbicularis* (L.) | II | HD II; IV | Very rare | Specially protected species |
| *Lacerta agilis* L. | II | HD IV | Comparatively rare | Specially protected species |
| *Lacerta vivipara* Jacq. | III | | Common | |
| *Anguis fragilis* L. | III | | Common | |
| *Natrix natrix* (L.) | III | | Very common | |
| *Coronella austriaca* Laur. | II | HD IV | Very rare | Specially protected species |
| *Vipera berus* (L.) | III | | Common | |

There are no special researches of amphibian and reptile population changes carried out during last five years, except *Bombina bombina*. Development of national amphibian monitoring program as Sub-Program of the Latvian National Environmental Monitoring Program is going on. Monitoring program will include estimation of diversity of species and estimation of amphibian quantity. It is planned to finish development of program till December 2006.

It is established, that both populations of *Bombina bombina* are decreasing (observations of specialists from Daugavpils zoo). In 2002 Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Latvia developed Life Starter project "*Bombina bombina* – A Baltic Conservation Strategy". During this project were clarified threats and needs of *B. bombina* population and action plan for species conservation was developed. After that, in 2003, a LIFE application for *Bombina bombina* management project was submitted. Now this LIFE project is already started.

LIFE project (LIFE-Nature 2004-34) "Management of fire-bellied toads in the Baltic region" includes improving of *Bombina bombina* habitats and development of species protection plan in Latvia. Both activities are ongoing.

Daugavpils zoo continues work with *Emys orbicularis* reserve population and research of *E. orbicularis* ecology in Latvia.

# VII. NORWAY / NORVÈGE

## PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF INVERTEBRATES IN NORWAY. STATUS 2006

Mr Kaare Aagaard
Norwegian University of Technology and Science, The Museum of Science and Archaeology. N0 7491 Trondheim, Norway

The Bern convention with it appendices is still by far the most important instrument in the work with legal protection of invertebrates in Norway. All protection initiatives are directly liked to the species list in the appendices

There are 10 invertebrates occurring in Norway that are listed on the Bern Convention Appendix II. All these species are protected according to the Nature Conservation Act and all the invertebrates listed in the Bern Convention Appendix II are re-evaluated according to IUCN rules for national red listing.

There are three species of invertebrates that are listed on the Bern Convention Appendix III. Of these, the noble crawfish *Astacus astacus* and the pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* gain especial attention; a new management plan for *M. margaritifera* is "in print" and an English summary of this plan is given as appendix here.

The noble crawfish is also in Norway threatened by the crawfish plague. The pest was first observed in Norway largest river, Glomma, in 1987. Total protection and reestablishment of the species produced a good abundance in 2002. However, in 2003, not a single individual of crawfish was observed or caught. The plague has most possible returned and also infected other watersheds with connection to Sweden. Population of the crawfish in Western Norway are so far not infected.

The leech, *Hirudo medicinalis,* is also protected. At present, there are nearly 40 localities of the leech in Norway

With the exception of the studies of the noble crawfish and the pearl mussel, no of other the Bern Convention species are monitored in a permanent survey at the moment. Some of them like the butterfly *Parnassius mnemosyne* are, however, suggested for future monitoring in a national plan.

A national species data bank has been in function since 2003 and is already an important institution in the conservation work of invertebrates.

### *Management plan for the pear mussel in Norway - summary*

The goal for the management of the freshwater pearl mussel is presence of healthy populations all over Norway within the normal living area of the species. All present natural populations should be maintained or improved.

Measures proposed in this action plan include complementary mapping, monitoring, information, habitat improving and improvement of routines in managing according to acts relevant for the freshwater pearl mussel.

It is proposed in this action plan that the County Governor administrations will have a central role in following up the plan.

The freshwater pearl mussel is an interesting species with a particular biology. It is long-lived, up to 200 years. It has a parasitic larval stage on fish, it is an efficient filterer and it stores environmental information in the shell. The species also has an exiting culture-historical background.

The freshwater pear mussel has had a dramatic decline in distribution and occurrence in Europe since the turn of the century. It has been indicated that that the population has decreased by 95% in central Europe and absence of young individuals has been observed in most of the European populations.

The situation in Norway is not that dramatic, but also in Norway a decline is observed as well as lack of young individuals in several populations. The freshwater pearl mussel therefore also is on the Norwegian red list of threatened species. As elsewhere in Europe the threats are many like, eutrophication, erosion, acid rainfall (especially in southern and western parts of the country), waterfalls regulations, closing of brooks etc.

The freshwater pearl mussel is a typical responsibility species for Norway. In Europe (exclusive the large Russian populations) it is assumed that Norway has 80% of the European individuals and 30% of the known populations. Number of individuals is in Norway calculated to 140 million and number of populations to 350.

# VIII. ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

## Report on the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Romania - 2006

### General situation of the natural habitat of Romania's amphibians and reptiles

As compared to the situation reported in 2003, the situation of the natural habitat has been balanced, an accelerated development of unprotected areas being countered by the declaration of a large number of protected sites (including national parks, natural parks and nature reserves) and some stricter measures of control for environment degradation and wildlife exploitation. Social and economical processes such as the return of some state lands to pre-communist owners or inheritants have taken their toll, as new owners are often eager to develop the land. In the case of forested plots, owners sometimes choose clear-cutting that may offer a rich and quick income despite an uncertain future with possible land slides and other degradation. Having these owners manage the private forests without clear-cutting, by a combination of regulations and incentives, is one of the issues being tackled now by government and forestry authorities.

Natural disaster has recently struck Romania in the shape of the floodings in 2005 and 2006. The inefficiency and inadequacy of the drainage-land reclamation scheme pursued by the pre-1989 communist government has been now revealed by the severest flooding in many decades as the levee systems have been unable to contain flood surges; thus former floodplains, later reclaimed for agriculture and settlement, have been flooded with tragical consequences. Currently some areas are being opened to natural flooding in order to make room for water and ease the pressure on levees protecting habitations. Some wetlands will thus be restored. Currently, however, the impact of the floods upon the natural habitats is negative, since many of the remaining wetlands along the Danube are being overwashed and/or silted by the flood surge with a corresponding loss of breeding habitat for many species, including amphibians, birds and even fishes that need still backwaters to breed. Rised waters also carry diverse contaminants from and to exposed grounds.

### Attitude of people towards amphibians and reptiles

Despite some public awareness campaigns, this has not greatly changed in the last years. In rural areas amphibian and reptile species are still often killed upon sight. Wildlife traffic still occurs, although measures have been taken to reduce it, including confiscation of illegaly hold tortoises and vipers. Large colubrids are also taken for the illegal trade, and illegal collecting of grass frogs (*Rana temporaria*) still continues. Overall, an attitude of indifference towards nature conservation in general, wrongly seen as far less important than economic and social issues, prevails in the general public. Environment-oriented education and its presence in the media can still be described as insufficient.

### Environmental law in Romania; its pertinence to herpetofaunal conservation

Environmental law in Romania is well-intended and quite comprehensive. Some of the most important environment-related laws before 2003 are given below:

Law no. 5/1991: Romania joins Ramsar convention; provides need for protecting wetlands.

Law no. 13/1993: Romania joins Bern convention; all herpetofauna thus protected.

Law no. 58/1994: Romania ratifies Rio de Janeiro biodiversity convention.

Law no. 69/1994: Romania part of CITES.

Law no. 30/1995: Romania part of Helsinki convention.

Law no. 137/1996: Environment law. General measures providing basis for further protective laws.

Law no. 26/1996: Forestry law. Provides measures for forest conservation and sustainable use.

Law no. 107/1996: Waters law. Provides measures for the conservation and sustainable use of waterbodies and wetlands.

Law no. 13/1998: Romania joins Bonn convention.

Law no. 5/2000: Protected areas' law. Creates and confirms extensive network of protected areas, including several new National Parks, some in areas very rich with herpetofauna.

Law no. 462/2001: Statute of protected areas, habitats and wildlife species. Provides additional conservation measures for amphibians and reptiles, such as the possibility of designating new protected areas for sites harbouring certain endangered species.

Since 2003 new laws have been enacted that pertain to the conservation of the environment and biodiversity, of which the following are most important:

Government decision no. 230/2003: Provides for the delimitation of national and natural parks and biosphere reserves, and creates administrative structures (including rangers etc) for these protected areas.

Government decision no. 2151/2004: A significant number of new protected areas are declared.

Government ordonance no. 195/2005: New environment law. Provides stricter measures for environment protection at various levels, including the status of pollutants, protection of habitats and species, the status of protected areas etc. according to EU adhesion requirements. It also makes reference of Natura 2000 regulations.

Environment Ministry order no. 1198/2005: Updates the protected species list for Law no. 462/2001. It mostly follows current EU Birds/Habitats Directives and also establishes a list of nationally important species that receive strict protection or special management besides the species listed in the Directives/ Natura 2000 list.

Environment Ministry order no. 207/2006: Provides legal basis for the establishment of Natura 2000 proposed sites database on a standardized base. (The database of Natura 2000 proposed sites is currently being developped for public access on the internet; ca. 300 sites are already proposed with various degrees of data completion).

Law enforcement efforts have been enhanced since 2003 with some notable successes: vipers were confiscated from illegal „farms", illegally caught tortoises were recovered at the frontier check, and generally the amphibian and reptile traffic has been reduced; it has not, unfortunately, been totally eliminated, and it persists as an „underground" network, but the reduction has been significant. Major problems faced by the environment protection authorities include, besides the traffic, conflicts between the administration of protected areas and local land-owners and developers, and the undermanning and underfunding of the administration of protected areas. Some governmental structures also engage in projects funded by the EU: the Caraş-Severin dept. EPA runs the Life-Nature project LIFE04/NAT/RO/00225 „The forests with *Pinus nigra banatica* – part of NATURA 2000" (started in 2004) that may also benefit some reptile species (*Vipera ammodytes*, *Testudo hermanni*); Galaţi Dept. EPA runs another Life project: LIFE05/NAT/RO/000155 „Ecological restoration of the Lower Prut floodplain natural park" that may benefit species such as *Triturus dobrogicus*, *Bombina bombina*, *Emys orbicularis* etc.

Another important document that was issued during this period was the Red Data Book of Romanian Vertebrates (2005; in Romanian only).

**Some non-governmental activities and internationally financed programs that (also) address the conservation of amphibians and reptiles**

A Romanian Herpetological Society (SRH – Societatea Română de Herpetologie), affiliated with SEH, has been recently established with „headquarters" at Cluj and it has continued a campaign in order to reduce the illegal gathering of *Rana temporaria* in Transsylvania. Together with another NGO, the CRIM (Centrul de Inițiativă pentru Mediu - Center of Initiative for the Environment) the SRH now runs Life-Nature project LIFE05/NAT/RO/000158 „Saving *Vipera ursinii rakosiensis* in Transsylvania" (started 2005) that endeavours to acquire and protect the habitat of the only Romanian *V. u. rakosiensis* population; it has already succeeded in stopping a SAPARD agricultural development programme targeting that very site. (Another NGO, the ECOS organization, based in Tulcea, with its special herpetofaunal conservation group RANA, has participated in the LIFE-Nature project LIFE/NAT/RO/06404 „In situ conservation of the Romanian Meadow Viper (*Vipera ursinii*)" (ended 2002) – it was focused on the Danube Delta populations; a management plan was devised.)

Another LIFE-Nature project: LIFE/NAT/RO/007171 „Iron Gates Natural Park – habitat conservation and management" (ended in 2004) was launched by the University of Bucharest through its Center for Environmental Research and Impact Studies; it targeted *Testudo hermanni* and *Vipera ammodytes* among other species and reported some success in breeding the Hermann's Tortoise – apparently eggs from wild females were incubated and the hatchlings released in the wild, this process only lasting throughout the duration of the project and ending with it in 2004. Some awareness campaigns were conducted through this project.

**Status of Romanian amphibians and reptiles (following IUCN criteria)**

The conservation status of the amphibians and reptiles of Romania through time (according to published evaluations) is summarized in the table below. One of the authors (Cogălniceanu, 1997) only dealt with amphibians. Since 2003 very few changes were needed:

| Taxon | Cogălniceanu & Venczel, 1993 | Cogălniceanu 1997 | Iftime, 2003 | 2006 status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Salamandra salamandra* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Triturus (Mesotriton) alpestris* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Triturus cristatus* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Triturus dobrogicus* | EN | EN | EN | EN |
| *Triturus* (*Lissotriton*) *montandoni* | R („rare") | VU | VU | VU |
| *Triturus* (*Lissotriton*) *vulgaris vulgaris* | LR: LC | LR | NT | NT |
| *Triturus* (*Lissotriton*) *vulgaris ampelensis* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Bombina bombina* | VU | VU | NT | NT |
| *Bombina variegata* | LR: LC | LR | NT | NT |
| *Pelobates fuscus* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Pelobates syriacus* | EN | EN | EN | EN |
| *Bufo bufo* | VU | VU | NT | NT |
| *Bufo viridis* | LR: LC | LR | NT | NT |
| *Hyla arborea* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Rana arvalis* | EN | EN | EN | EN |
| *Rana dalmatina* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Rana lessonae* | DD | DD | LC | NT |
| *Rana ridibunda* | LR: LC | LR | LC | LC |
| *Rana temporaria* | VU | VU | VU | VU |
| *Rana esculenta* | LR: LC | LR | LC | LC |
| *Testudo graeca* [*T.* (*g.*) *ibera*] | EN | - | EN | EN |
| *Testudo hermanni* | EN | - | EN | EN |
| *Emys orbicularis* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Ablepharus kitaibelli* | VU | - | EN | EN |
| *Eremias arguta* | EN | - | EN | EN |
| *Lacerta agilis* | VU | - | LC | LC |
| *Lacerta trilineata* | VU | - | EN | EN |
| *Lacerta viridis* | VU | - | LC | LC |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Lacerta* (*Zootoca*) *vivipara* | LR: LC | - | LC | LC |
| *Lacerta* (*Darevskia*) *praticola* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Podarcis muralis* | VU | - | VU | NT |
| *Podarcis taurica* | VU | - | NT | NT |
| *Anguis fragilis* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Eryx jaculus* | EX? | - | CR/ EX | CR/ EX |
| *Dolichophis caspius* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Coronella austriaca* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Zamenis longissimus* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Elaphe quatuorlineata* | EN | - | CR | CR |
| *Natrix natrix* | LR: LC | - | LC | LC |
| *Natrix tessellata* | VU | - | VU | VU |
| *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes* | VU | - | EN | EN |
| *Vipera ammodytes montandoni* | VU | - | CR | CR |
| *Vipera berus* | LR: LC | - | EN | EN |
| *Vipera ursinii moldavica* | EN | - | CR | CR |
| *Vipera ursinii rakosiensis* | EN | - | CR | CR |
| *Vipera* (*ursinii*) *renardi* | EN | - | CR | CR |

**Detailed description of the status of selected Romanian amphibians and reptiles**

For species where the status has been modified, and for species under EU Action Plans, the IUCN status and criteria are presented, together with a brief assessment of their situation and their main causes for decline. For the rest of species the situation has not changed significantly since 2003 and the resume given at that time is still valid.

***Triturus cristatus***: VU A2,4 acde. Decline through destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitat, especially breeding ponds, by expansion of industrial, touristic and residential development, pollution (especially agricultural pesticides and fertilizers, but also domestic sewage, that wash into breeding ponds). Is also illegaly collected for the pet trade.

***Triturus dobrogicus***: EN A2,4 ace, B1 bc. Severe decline by degradation and destruction of habitat, especially breeding ponds. More than half of the species' original habitat has been lost through the drainage of most of the Danube floodplain and associated lakes. The pollution of the Danube is also a threat, as are disruptions of wetland habitats by severe flooding surge. Has a restricted areal along the Danube, the Danube Delta and a few large rivers.

***Rana lessonae***: NT (LC in 2003). Recent surveys (e.g. Covaciu-Marcov, 2004) only found relatively rare and small populations; it appears to be sporadically present but nowhere abundant. Decline due to habitat destruction and degradation, especially draining of breeding ponds; it is most often found in smaller water bodies and therefore more vulnerable to draining, drought, pollution etc.

***Podarcis muralis***: NT (VU in 2003). Decline due to habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation by residential, touristic and industrial (e.g. stone quarries) development, and pesticide pollution. Some populations extinct, others threatened; however, still numerous in places, and these remaining populations seem stable, and some of them abundant or even expanding; on the whole a reclassification to NT seems justified.

***Elaphe longissima***: VU A2,4 ace, C1,2a. Decline due to habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation by deforestation, extension of residential, touristic, agricultural and industrial development, pesticide and fertilizers pollution, as well as degradation of vegetal cover by grazing

cattle, sheep and goats. Road traffic and direct killing by locals are additional causes for mortality. Some populations extinct (e.g. Săruleşti); more frequent in some places (SW Romania).

***Vipera ursinii moldavica***: CR A2,4 acde, B1 ab (i-v). Extremely grave decline, mainly due to habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation by deforestation, extension of residential, touristic, agricultural and industrial development, pesticide and fertilizers pollution, as well as degradation of vegetal cover by grazing cattle, sheep and goats; also due to illegal collecting (for venom commercialization). Road traffic and direct killing by locals are additional causes for mortality. A localized subspecies with a restricted areal. Most Romanian populations likely extinct; the only two that certainly survive are severely threatened (Krecsak et al., 2003).

***Vipera ursinii rakosiensis***: CR B2 ab (i-v). Extremely grave decline, mainly due to habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation by deforestation, extension of residential, touristic, agricultural and industrial development, pesticide and fertilizers pollution, as well as degradation of vegetal cover by grazing cattle, sheep and goats; also due to illegal collecting (for venom commercialization). Road traffic and direct killing by locals are additional causes for mortality. Extinct at its best-known site in Romania, near Cluj, where last seen in 1955; one other recently discovered population in Transsylvania, not far from the first, is the only certainly surviving; it seems healthy with ca. 300 specimens, but isolated on a very small area (ca. 30 ha) and thus extremely vulnerable (I. Ghira, pers. comm.).

***Vipera ursinii moldavica* / *V. renardi*** (Danube Delta – this population has been ascribed to *moldavica* by most authors, including Nilsson and Andren, 2001, but these last note that it is dimorphic with one morph similar to *renardi* most numerous in the Delta; at least morphologically the Delta population seems closer to *renardi* than typical Iaşi *moldavica*): CR B1ab (iii, v). Grave decline, mainly due to habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation by deforestation, extension of residential, touristic, agricultural and industrial development, pesticide and fertilizers pollution, as well as degradation of vegetal cover by grazing cattle, sheep and goats; also due to illegal collecting (for venom commercialization). Road traffic and direct killing by locals are additional causes for mortality. Some populations extinct, the remainder severely threatened (Török, 2002).

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Alexandru IFTIME, , "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History, Şos. Kiseleff nr. 1, 011341 Bucharest, Romania (e-mail: aiftime@antipa.ro)

# IX. SLOVAKIA / SLOVAQUIE

## Conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Slovakia

### Introduction

Currently 18 species of amphibians (including 1 hybrid species – *Rana* kl. *esculenta*) and 13 species of reptiles (including non-native species *Trachemys scripta elegans*) are occurring in Slovakia. All of them, except *T. s. elegans*, are legally protected and its social value is between € 53-400 (amphibians) and € 80-1.067 (reptiles). The social value means the commercial value of the one specimen, which is using for the social damage estimation in the case of damage or killing the specimen. In the National Red List of Amphibians and Reptiles (KAUTMAN, BARTÍK & URBAN 2001a, 2001b) 18 species of amphibians and 11 species of reptiles are listed. The more details are available in the previous national report (2003). Because of new information about amphibians and reptiles distribution in Slovakia the update of the Red List in accordance with categories and criterion of IUCN version 3.1 is necessary in the near future. In 2005 the criterion for definition of favourable conservation status (FCS) were proposed for the species listed in the Habitats Directive (HD) with occurrence in Slovakia (14 species of amphibians and 9 species of reptiles). The texts (in Slovak) are available on the web page www.sopsr.sk. Currently the experts are working on the methods of monitoring of the FCS.

FCS of amphibians and reptiles should be specified in accordance with following criterion (KAUTMAN 2005):

**Amphibians and *Emys orbicularis***

Population – number, density and dynamics of population, structure of population, area, trend and continuity of distribution area, continuity/isolation of population

Biotopes – biotopes of adults and subadults, biotopes of reproduction

Threats – of biotopes of adults and subadults, of biotopes of reproduction

**Reptiles** (except *E. orbicularis*)

Population – number, density and dynamics of population, structure of population, area, trend and continuity of distribution area, continuity/isolation of population

Biotopes – state

Threats – of population and biotopes

### Rescue Programme of critically endangered species European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*)

The programme was prepared by specialists and adopted by the Ministry of Environment in 2002. There are basic information about biology, ecology, distribution and conservation of the species, including the main management activities, which are necessary for achievement of the FCS. The only 1 native locality of this species is in Slovakia (east-south of Slovakia) and number of population vary between 60-70 specimens. The breeding station of the species was established, which is situated in the Sv. Jur village (near Bratislava). The raising specimens are released to the suitable biotopes within Slovakia.

In the following part the main management activities are listed, which were realized within the programme:

- monitoring of species (including telemetric monitoring)
- monitoring of potential suitable habitats for restitution of the species
- protection of breeding sites

- monitoring of harvests
- ex-situ protection (breeding station)
- monitoring of negative factors (especially destruction of biotopes and harvests, negative influence of non-native species *Trachemys scripta elegans*)
- cooperation with colleagues from other countries
- activities focused on achievement to higher public awareness

The programme was prepared for 5 years period (2002-2006). The new programme will be composed in 2006.

### Other activities

- reconstruction of existing or creation of new biotopes of reproduction
- protection of the species during the migration period; especially building of the barriers along the roads and transfer of individuals
- creating and actualization of the database and GIS layers of the critical collision courses of the roads
- preparing of an management programmes of the European and national important localities of amphibians and reptiles (e.g. management plan and zonation of the Nature Reservation Čabraď)
- all the available data about distribution of amphibians and reptiles within Slovakia are included into the database of the Information system of taxons and biotopes

### Negative influence of non-native species *Trachemys scripta elegans* on native species of amphibians and reptiles

*T. s. elegans* is species with high adaptability from the food and biotopes point of view. The species has very high competitive abilities towards the native turtle species *E. orbicularis* (biotopes competition). The native amphibians form significant part of food of the species.

In Slovakia *T. s. elegans* was found for the first time in 1987 (Bratislava – Železná studnička, pond). There were 3 localities with occurrence of the species until 2000. Currently we have information about more then 15 localities with total number of the specimens more then 100.

*T. s elegans* in non-native species listed in the annex of CITES. Since 2004 the import of the species to Slovakia is prohibited. Despite that fact, there are still a lot of specimens in the wild and the number is increasing due to illegal releasing. In this time we have no information about reproduction of *T. s. elegans* in the wild, but it is long-lived species which would be the negative factor for a long time.

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**Written by:** Mgr. Ľubomíra Vavrová, zoologist of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, Lazovná 10, 974 01 Banská Bystrica, Slovakia
e-mail: vavrova@sopsr.sk
mobile: +421 911 12 12 77 **Date: 26.5.2006**

# X. SWITZERLAND / SSUISSE

## Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Switzerland from 2003 to 2006

*A summary prepared for the meeting of the Bern Convention Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles, Strasbourg, 4-5 May 2006.*

**General**

- Karch (Koordinationsstelle für Amphibien- und Reptilienschutz in der Schweiz, Swiss Programme for the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles) improved its website: http://www.karch.ch/. For example, there is now an option to reports observations online.
- Karch has improved its documenation on amphibians and reptiles. For example, we published a new leaflet on poisonous snakes.
- "Important Herpetological Areas" were defined and should be submitted soon.

**Amphibians**

- A new red list of amphibians was published in autumn 2005. The new red list is based on extensive field data and uses the criteria of the IUCN. Several species have suffered declines >50% in the last 20 years. Thus, 70% of all species were red-listed.
- The monitoring of *Rana latastei* was continued by a dedicated team on a volunteer basis.
- In collaboration with scientists from London, we screened swiss amphibians for the fungus causing chytridiomycosis. Chytrids were found in many species and many places, including midwife toads.
- There is now quite "healthy" research on amphibians at several swiss universities (mainly Zurich and Lausanne). There is a strong focus on conservation genetics. Karch is also supervising master theses on amphibians and reptiles.
- There is a project underway to revisit all known *Triturus cristatus* sites. Volunteers will do the field work. Two master students will survey the distribution of the crested newts in the Geneva area.
- Several cantons have action plans for threatened species, e.g. canton Zurich for *Alytes obstetricans*, *Bufo calamita*, *Hyla arborea* and *Triturus cristatus*.

**Reptiles**

- A new red list of reptiles was published in autumn 2005. The new red list is based on extensive field data and uses the criteria of the IUCN. Field data show strong declines for many species. Thus, 79% of the taxa were red-listed.
- There will be no "Inventory of reptiles sites of national importance" (i.e. a system of reserves of the best reptile sites, analogous to the same thing that was made for amphibians). There will be however, a list of priority sites for reptile conservation.
- Monitoring of some reptile populations was continued. For example, we continued to monitor the populations of *Natrix maura*, a species ranked CR on the new red list.
- Karch is using volunteers to surveys *Lacerta agilis* sites.
- First action plans for threatened reptiles were prepared by some cantons.

Benedikt Schmidt, May 30, 2006