



Conference Abstract

Diet of the Viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* (Lichtenstein, 1823) (Reptilia: Lacertidae) from its southern range

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Received: 11 Sep 2019 | Published: 11 Sep 2019

Citation: Vacheva E, Naumov B (2019) Diet of the Viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* (Lichtenstein, 1823) (Reptilia: Lacertidae) from its southern range. ARPHA Conference Abstracts 2: e46484. <https://doi.org/10.3897/aca.2.e46484>

Abstract

The Viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* (Lichtenstein, 1823) is widespread across Eurasia, but in Bulgaria it is considered a glacial relict, restricted to the high mountains. In spite of its wide distribution, there is still lack of knowledge on its dietary habits, especially from the southern part of the range.

In order to shed light on its diet, we conducted a study in three mountain sites in Bulgaria (Vitosha, Rila and Stara Planina Mtns.). They were visited in 2016 and 2017 during the lizard's active season (May–September); 343 Viviparous lizards were captured by hand and measured and weighed. To investigate the food preferences, we adopted a non-invasive method, obtaining faecal samples, which were then analysed under a stereoscopic microscope. A total of 290 faecal samples that could be assigned to individual specimens with determined age and sex were collected.

We calculated the relative abundance and occurrence of each prey category. Data were compared by sex and age classes (immatures vs. adults) as a whole and for each of the three sites.

A total of 19 prey categories were detected and the number of categories per study site varied between 16 and 18. The most common invertebrates were Araneae and

Auchenorrhyncha. Statistically significant differences between immatures and adults were found as adults showed more diverse diet. No such differences between sexes were detected.

Keywords

Balkan peninsula, faecal samples, food preferences, Sauria

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Presented at

Vth International Congress on Biodiversity: „Taxonomy, Speciation and Euro-Mediterranean Biodiversity“

Funding program

The present study was partially supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under the National Research Program “Young scientists and postdoctoral students” approved by DCM # 577 / 17.08.2018.