

NOTES ON SOME OF THE REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF LANGUEDOC, SOUTHERN FRANCE

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The following is an account of the herpetofauna I observed during a two week holiday at Valras Plage, between 28th August and 8th September, 1982. Valras Plage is a small resort near Béziers, in the department of Herault.

The first species observed was the Green Lizard, *Lacerta viridis*, which was quite common in and around the thick bamboo hedge which surrounded the campsite. This species was also seen in densely-vegetated parts of the dry salt-marsh that separated the campsite from the coastal dunes. The dunes themselves proved to be very interesting, harbouring reasonable numbers of the Spanish Sand-Racer, *Psammodromus hispanicus*. Although this species has been recorded from relatively few places in France, it is said to be present at Sete, a few kilometres to the east, so its presence at Valras is not very surprising. Two other species were seen on the dunes, the first, a Montpellier Snake, *Malpolon monspessulanus*, was found in hiding under an old board, and, on being disturbed, slid fluidly away through the marram grass. About twenty metres from this spot, a large male *Lacerta lepida* was basking on an old oil-can. Despite spending many hours in the dunes, this was the only Eyed Lizard that was seen.

The wall lizard, *Podarcis muralis* was seen almost everywhere, (with the exception of the dunes), but the greatest numbers were found on the walls of the old city of Carcassonne, where literally hundreds of lizards were scuttling about.

One particularly humid evening proved to be to the liking of the resident amphibians on the camp. In the space of about thirty minutes I counted six Natterjacks, *Bufo calamita*, wandering across a sandy field in an empty part of the site. A Parsley frog, *Pelodytes punctatus*, was found squatting at the base of a tree; I was particularly pleased to find this animal as it was the first of this species that I had ever seen. Two large *Hyla meridionalis* were resident in the shower block, and were often observed late at night feeding on the insects that were attracted to the lights.

Two notable road casualties were seen near the camp: the first, an Asp viper, *Vipera aspis*, was found by a vineyard; the second, a large Western Spadefoot, *Pelobates cultripes*, was found on a small lane passing through sandy meadows near the dunes.