

LACERTA (ZOOTOCA) VIVIPARA (Viviparous or Common lizard: ALTERNATE GREEN COLOUR PHASE. Most literature states a notable diversity of pattern and colour variation in the species *Zootoca vivipara*. Colin Simms (1970) described a significant proportion of many populations of the species to exhibit a 'green' colouration, to the degree that he stated specimens were 'approaching the green of the grass they live in'. It was during a routine *Vipera berus* field study on Wednesday 20th April of this year that such a Viviparous lizard was captured at a site near Black Hill, Quantock Hills, Somerset (see photograph). The site consisted of a south-facing slope covered in a variety of heather, gorse, and dry grasses. The abundance of dead material scattered on the ground suggests that the area had undergone swailing prior to our arrival with plant life beginning to come through once more and provide a scrub-like habitat. Thick shelter and refuge was present in the form of a series of heather and gorse hedgerows arranged along the centre of the site. Many lizards had previously been witnessed displaying regular colouration throughout the site and also in surrounding areas. The lizard was collected whilst moving across grass and scrub towards refugia (heather and gorse). The physical appearance and patterning exhibited by the individual was typical of the female of the species. A constant yet faded vertebral stripe and dark flanks was observed although additional patterning (ocelli, streaks, or

other markings) was absent. Significant features included a distinct turquoise blue marking covering part of the head over the left eye, and also the absence of three digits on the right forelimb. Frank D. Bowles (2000) described a specimen which displayed a turquoise sheen, commonly seen in varying light conditions and when photographed. It was this same turquoise sheen that was witnessed in this particular lizard when exposed to light. During that afternoon a further two individuals were seen to exhibit the same full colouration although no detail was observed. One of these displayed a more bold colour in comparison to others. The captured lizard was examined, photographed, and released the same afternoon.

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REFERENCES

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