

white or yellow in life) borders the parietal cap, covers the posterior supralabials, temporals and 0.5 – 1.5 rows of dorsals. The black nuchal ring is 7 dorsals long vertebrally; other black rings are 4 – 8 dorsals long vertebrally. The mental and 1st infralabials are black except in the area where they are in contact with each other; the 2nd infralabials and the anterior part of the 3rd infralabials are also black, with black pigmentation extending onto the lateral margins of the anterior chinshields; the posterior chinshields are black except for their anterior margins, connecting to the black nuchal ring. The pale rings vary from 1.5 – 3 middorsals in length. All the pale dorsal scales are tipped with black spots. The red rings are 3.5 – 6 middorsals long. All the red dorsals have black apices. The tail is bicoloured with 6 black rings separated by shorter white rings. The tail tip is black, as is the tongue. The pale rings are immaculate ventrally except on the tail while irregular black spots are present in the red rings. All rings are complete. There are 15 dorsal scale rows, 1 + 1 temporals, 44 divided subcaudals, a divided anal plate, no supra-anal keels, and 202 ventrals.

In most characters of its external phenotype, this specimen falls within the range of variation reported for the poorly known Peruvian coral snake, *Micrurus peruvianus* SCHMIDT, 1936, and it is with present knowledge referred to this taxon as recognized by SCHMIDT (1936), CAMPBELL & LAMAR (1989) and ROZE (1996). The subcaudal counts (44) and total length (543 mm) of the snake from Zumba exceed the range published for *M. peruvianus*, which is however known from a few specimens only (26 – 42 subcaudals, maximum reported sizes 415 and 433 mm; CAMPBELL & LAMAR 1989; ROZE 1996).

Micrurus peruvianus has previously been known from the Río Marañón drainage in the northern Andes of Peru, where it has been reported from Perico and Bellavista, Departamento de Cajamarca, and Bagua Grande, Departamento de Amazonas (CAMPBELL & LAMAR 1989). Zumba lies at the northern edge of the Huancabamba Depression and is surrounded to the west, north and east by mountains of the Continental Divide, the Cordillera de Tzun-

antza, and the Cordillera del Cóndor, respectively. To the southeast, it is drained by the Río Mayo-Río Chinchipe river system, which connects the area of Zumba to the Río Marañón. The present record of *M. peruvianus* from Ecuador, anticipated by CAMPBELL & LAMAR (1989: 136), extends the known range of this species 120 km north-west from its previous northernmost collecting locality (Bagua Grande, Departamento Amazonas, Perú), and suggests a wider distribution in the Río Mayo, Río Chinchipe and upper Río Marañón drainages and adjacent Andean slopes.

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Testudo hermanni GMELIN, 1789 in Dobroudja (SE Romania), with comments on conservation

Romania's Dobroudja region lies south of the Danube, between that river and the Black Sea and is thus contiguous with nearby Bulgaria. It is a region of great scenic diversity, ranging from the granite peaks of Măcin and the sand spits of the Razim-Sinoe lagoons, through the hills of Babadag and the central tablelands to the southern limestone plateaus, cut by karstic phenome-

na and gorges. It is this last region, more precisely its south-western part, belonging to the department of Constanța, that is of interest for our work. The natural vegetation here was thermophilous oak or oak-hornbeam forest, interspersed with sub-Mediterranean type shrubland and chasmophytic chalciphylous vegetation on limestone outcroppings and gorges; but it has made place over most of the region for corn fields, pastures and vineyards, the native vegetation remaining as larger or smaller "islands", generally centered around limestone gorges, steep hills or marsh-bordered lakes that made exploitation difficult. These forest islands and the neighbouring wetlands harbour an extremely rich herpetofauna: *Bombina bombina*, *Pelobates fuscus*, *P. syriacus*, *Bufo viridis*, *Hyla arborea*, *Rana ridibunda*, *R. esculenta* / *R. lessonae* (FUHN 1960); *Testudo graeca*, *Emys orbicularis*, *Ablepharus kitaibelli*, *Lacerta viridis*, *Podarcis muralis*, *P. taurica*, *Eryx jaculus*, *Coluber caspius*, *Natrix natrix*, *N. tessellata*, *Vipera ammodytes* (FUHN & VANCEA 1961); *Lacerta praticola* (FUHN & HÄRSU 1962); *Lacerta trilineata* (SÄVULESCU & POPESCU-GORJ 1964); *Rana dalmatina*, *Lacerta agilis*, *Elaphe longissima* (IFTIME, unpublished), together with other interesting faunal elements (SÄVULESCU & POPESCU-GORJ 1964; IANA 1973). Whereas *Testudo graeca* (LINNAEUS, 1758) is well-known in the region and is mentioned by all workers, *T. hermanni* GMELIN, 1789 seems to have been overlooked, perhaps by confusion with *T. graeca*, although it is known to occur in the neighbouring regions of Bulgaria (BOUR 1997). Only SCHREIBERS (1912) mentioned the occurrence of *T. hermanni* in the Danube Delta; however, this was doubted by all succeeding authors (CHEYLAN 2001).

The author and his wife have undertaken field surveys of amphibians and reptiles in the above-mentioned region (south-western Dobroudja) during five years (1997-2002), from February to September, totalling about 35 active search hours. Specimens observed were photographed.

During our field trips to the region, we encountered *Testudo hermanni* (besides most of the species recorded by earlier workers) in three instances: in July 2001, an adult female, in the neighbourhood of the



Fig. 1: Juvenile female *Testudo hermanni*, near Adamclisi (Dobroudja, Romania). Photo by A. IFTIME.
Abb. 1: Junges Weibchen von *Testudo hermanni*, nahe Adamclisi (Dobrukscha, Rumänien). Photo: A. IFTIME.



Fig. 2: Adult male *Testudo hermanni* hauling itself from a stream with steep banks, near Băneasa (Dobroudja, Romania). Photo by A. IFTIME.
Abb. 2: Adultes Männchen von *Testudo hermanni*, das Steilufer eines Baches nahe Băneasa (Dobrukscha, Rumänien) erkletternd. Photo: A. IFTIME.

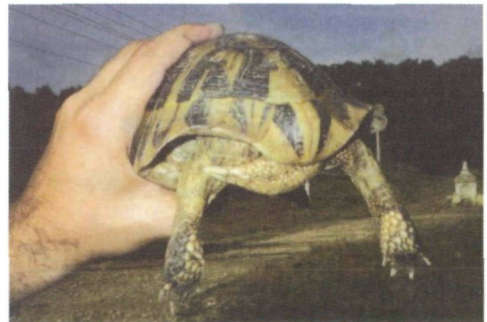


Fig. 3: Same male as in fig. 2, held to show divided supracaudal plate and tail spur. Photo by Oana. IFTIME.
Abb. 3: Männchen von Abb. 2. mit deutlich erkennbarem paarigen Supracaudalschild und Schwanzdorn. Photo: Oana IFTIME.

town of Băneasa (15 km north from the territory of Bulgaria), hiding from the midday heat in a dense thicket of native hawthorn and introduced black pine; in May 2002, a juvenile female (fig. 1), in the neighbourhood of the town of Adamclisi, in a loess ravine at the edge of an old-growth oak forest; in July 2002, an adult male (figs. 2, 3) in the neighbourhood of the town of Băneasa, swimming in a steep-banked stream where it had fallen from a neighbouring mixed forest of oak, hornbeam and introduced walnut and honey locust. Photos were taken of all three specimens. The specimens naturally belong to the eastern subspecies, *T. h. boettgeri* MOJSISOVIC, 1889. At all locations *T. graeca* is also present. Although its presence here might have been inferred from its occurrence in nearby Bulgaria, Romanian records of *T. hermanni* were so far known only from the south-west of the country, ca. 500 km away from the new locations (FUHN & VANCEA 1961).

As it appears from the few records that we have made, there must be at least two populations of *T. hermanni*: one nearby Băneasa, the other nearby Adamclisi. The populations must be very small in numbers, for we have met in the region only three *T. hermanni* versus about fifty *T. graeca*, during regular field trips extending for five years. However they are still reproducing as shown by the May 2002 juvenile which was probably 3-4 years old. *Testudo hermanni*, like *T. graeca*, occupies "islands" of natural habitat (forest and scrub) as well as adjacent man-modified forest (with introduced species such as black pine, walnut and honey locust) in the "fringes" of these "islands"; they are absent in strongly modified habitats such as pasturelands, vineyards, croplands or orchards.

The presence of *T. hermanni* alongside *T. graeca* in the southern Dobroudja is of great interest for the conservation of the remaining patches of natural habitat, as they are the only habitats in Romania with two species of tortoises (everywhere else only one of them is present); this increases the biodiversity value of the local habitats as well as their conservation importance, as both *Testudo* species are endangered in Romania and Europe and are in great need of protection. We have to add that although

some of the remaining patches of natural habitat in southern Dobroudja have natural reserve status (such as Canaraua Fetei gorges, Dumbrăveni forest, Esechioi forest), this is not always adequately enforced and thus even the "protected" forests are subject to a score of threats to their biodiversity, most of them also afflicting the local herpetofauna and the tortoises. Such threats are: overgrazing of forest edges by cattle, sheep and goats; predation of reptile (including tortoises) eggs and juveniles by free-ranging pigs and dogs; logging of the native forest cover and its replacement with non-native species, of which particularly noxious is the honey locust, that if planted massively excludes native vegetal species and does not provide adequate food or shelter for the native fauna; "spontaneous" killing of all reptile species, but mainly of snakes, by locals; and, last but extremely important, illegal collecting of reptiles, especially tortoises and *Vipera ammodytes*, for the pet trade or (in case of the viper) for tentative farming in order to market the venom (we must add that almost all such attempts at farming, that we know of, have failed resulting only in the loss of wild-caught specimens). As for now, these threats occur at moderate intensity and the amphibian and reptile populations are still at good levels, at least in some of their remaining habitats, but if the threats increase in intensity they could drive most herpetofaunal populations to sharp declines. We must hope that this unique habitat of reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife will not share the fate of most of the Romanian countryside which is now largely devoid of wild animals.

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Herpetological notes on the Dodecanese Islands of Symi and Sesklia (Greece)

The following notes are an account of the herpetofauna observed during a visit to the Dodecanese island of Symi and the small nearby island of Sesklia in 2002. Nine days were spent on Symi and one day on Sesklia. Symi is about 13 km long from north to south and 8 km wide from east to west, with a total surface area of 58 km². The highest point is Mount Vigla (616 m a.s.l.). The island of Symi lies at the door to Asia Minor, 8 km from the Peninsula of Knidos and 7 km from the Peninsula of Tracheia. The distance to the Greek Island of Rhodes is about 40 km.

Symi is very dry and consists mainly of a limestone massif with steep slopes. In the middle and southern part of the island there are some wooded areas with *Cupressus sempervirens f. horizontalis* and *Pinus brutia*. While exploring the island between April 23 and May 1, 2002, it was not possible to find any wetland areas or flowing water. The rather cool temperatures were not very conducive to reptile observing. Early references to the herpetofauna on Symi

can be found in BOETTGER (1888), WERNER (1930, 1933, 1935, 1938) and WETTSTEIN (1953); more details are given in CLARK (1972, 1992) and BUTTLE (1995). The islet of Sesklia, which is only 1.5 km² in size, seems not to have been visited before. It belongs to the property of the monastery of Panormitis and lies about 1 km south of the island of Symi. In the centre there is a doline-like valley used for cultivations, while sheep and goats graze on the rest of the island. Table 1 lists the amphibian and reptile taxa known to occur on the Islands of Symi and Sesklia.

Bufo viridis viridis LAURENTI, 1768. BUTTLE (1995) said that no Green Toads were found on the island, but local information led him to believe that this species must live on Symi. Evidence of populations was found in the form of well-developed tadpoles in five artificial water cisterns on the top of the plateau. Adult toads that had been run over were seen in three different locations, including in the town of Gialos, above Pedi, and on the eastern high plain near Kokkimidis. Thus, the population of Green Toads on the high plain of Symi is assured, thanks to the artificial stands of water. In one of the larger cisterns near Ag. Konstantinos, the Green Toad larvae are in ecological competition with a small fish (*Gambusia affinis*, det. K. GROSSENBACHER and S. ZUMBACH, (Natural History Museum Bern). The tadpoles were only able to survive in a separate section that was free of fishes. The cisterns are, however, not designed in an amphibian-friendly way and do not promote reproduction.

Table 1: Amphibian and reptile species known to occur on the Dodecanese Islands of Symi (SY) and Sesklia (SE) (Greece). New records in bold italics.

<i>Bufo viridis viridis</i>	SY	-
<i>Testudo graeca iberica</i>	SY	-
<i>Cyrtopodion kotschyi steindachneri</i>	SY	-
<i>Hemidactylus turcicus turcicus</i>	SY	-
<i>Laudakia stellio daani</i>	SY	SE
<i>Lacerta oertzeni pelagiana</i>	SY	SE
<i>Ophisops elegans ehrenbergii</i>	SY	SE
<i>Ablepharus kitaibelii kitaibelii</i>	SY	-
<i>Mabuya aurata septemtaeniata</i>	SY	-
<i>Blanus strauchi</i>	SY	SE
<i>Coluber (Hierophis) caspius</i>	SY	-
<i>Coluber nummifer</i>	SY	-
<i>Eirenis modestus</i>	SY	SE
<i>Vipera xanthina</i>	SY	-

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