Central Spain, 25.09. - 03.10.2010

During this year’s autumn trip we wanted to visit the Iberolacerta species in Central Spain. Given warm temperatures and constantly sunny weather this journey rather was a second summer trip – hence we were able to visit the high altitude lizard habitats in the mountains. The three stations of our trip were Sierra de Gredos, Pena de Francia and Sierra de Guadarrama.

The most common flowering mountain plant during our autumn trip: Merendera montana

Sierra de Gredos

We started lizard hunting in the area of Hoyos del Espino where Podarcis hispanicus as well as Lacerta schreiberi are common species. Above 1800 metres we found Iberolacerta cyreni castiliana.

A little diva: juvenile Lacerta schreiberi
A male of Podarcis hispanicus Type 1, which is considered as a separate species.

Another male: this lizards can be distinguished from P. hispanicus (sensu stricto) and also from P. hispanicus Type 2 which occurs in Southern Spain: in particular, the bold black dorsal markings seem to be a characteristic of Type 1.

Cold high plateau in the Sierra de Gredos – home of Iberolacerta cyreni castillana.
The Iberolacertas turned out to be great photo models, really patient while being photographed...

Like a small monitor lizard!

Another male, posing in front of the camera
Circo de Gredos: During a hike to the Laguna Grande Iberolacerta cyreni was omnipresent – ideal conditions for our next photo session …

...some males show bright greenish colours...

...another beautiful male (we couldn’t get enough of these lizards)…
...and a dark coloured specimen – the lizards were active during the whole day, even basking in the bright afternoon sun.

In the Gredos nature reserve, Capra pyrenaica can be seen everywhere – the animals aren’t shy at all.

Ephippiger sp.
At Laguna Grande Pamassia palustris was flourishing

Rana iberica

Natrix maura
On Pena de Francia we watched out for the second rock lizard species in Central Spain – Iberolacerta martinezrical. We had low expectations with regard to that species, as it is rather rare and sometimes tricky to be found. During the three days of our stay we came across several juveniles but didn’t find any adult – they simply weren’t out at that time!
At the village of Monsagro we found a water basin with Triturus pygmeus and...
...this adult Lacerta schreiberi

The most widespread lizard in Spain: Psammodromus algirus

Sierra de Guadarrama

Our third station was Sierra de Guadarrama – home of Iberolacerta cyreni ssp. cyreni. This mountain range is a popular touristic area with roads leading straight to the mountain passes where Iberolacerta cyreni occurs. So, no long hikes were necessary!
Juvenile *Natrix maura*

Our only shot of *Timon lepidus*

*Podarcis hispanicus* Type 1 can also be found in Sierra de Guadarrama – a female
Within Sierra de Guadarrama

Crocus serotinus

Iberolacerta cyrenis cyrenis...
...lives in syntopy with Podarcis muralis

Some of the wall lizards have nice reddish throats

Another Iberolacerta cyreni cyreni with blue ventral scales...
And again – Iberolacerta cyreni: in contrast to the lizards from Gredos the ssp. cyreni doesn’t have bright green colours.

The lizards could be found during the whole day – but as the weather turned windy in the evening, they disappeared in rock crevices.

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The home of European lizards - by Birgit & Peter Oefinger!