

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

This number of *Natura Croatica* is entirely dedicated to the study of and research into Mediterranean lacertids and contains some of the papers that were presented orally or at poster sessions during the *Third International Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin* held last year in Cres, Croatia (25–29 May, 1998). On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Natura Croatica*, I would like to express my gratitude to all the authors for their contributions and help in the making of this number.

Josip Balabanić,
Editor in Chief



PREFACE

For the third time, lacertid lizard specialists from several countries met at the International Symposium on the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin, this time in Cres (Croatia).

During the Symposium, 52 oral and poster contributions were presented. This volume puts together almost 30% of them, including 6 of the 9 plenary lectures given during the Symposium, all prepared and reviewed for the publication according to the propositions of *Natura Croatica*. Thus, the volume is a mixture of broad surveys given in invited plenary lectures and papers on particular topics. From a quantitative point of view, the result can be considered very positive, considering how successful the Third Symposium was in terms of number of communications, outdoing the 39 communications made in Lesvos (Greece) and the 37 presented in Quinta de Marim (Algarve, Portugal).

Even now, it would be too early and rather pretentious, after only three symposia, to make a critical analysis of the representativeness of these Symposia in relation to present day trends in research into Mediterranean Lacertidae. The efforts of the organizers merit our warmest praise, first of all for the arrangement of an unforgettable meeting in such a beautiful place and then, for the arduous and painstaking task of editing this volume.

The fact is that, after three meetings, the International Symposium of the Lacertids of the Mediterranean Basin has been considerably strengthened as an open fo-

rum for the presentation of new approaches in the study of lacertid lizards, and has become a suitable site for the presentation of the current state of knowledge of different scientific subjects employing the lizards in this group as model organisms. In several cases, the Symposium was the first opportunity for young students to meet leading specialists in lizard research. Even if only for this reason, the symposium has to be maintained in the future. We are happy about the deep involvement of several colleagues in a common effort to improve the scientific level of meetings. The result was an audience at this Third Symposium wider than in any of the previous versions. It is clear that this is the right way. Congratulations again to the Organizing Committee in Croatia and thanks for the work they have put into the publication of this volume. The only problem is that the level attained by the organizers in Cres was high enough to present a problem to future symposia, which will find it hard to attract such a wide group of distinguished participants and to tackle the organisational matters so effectively.

Valentín Pérez-Mellado
Salamanca, December 1999

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