

**Remarks on Death feigning in *Coronella austriaca* (LAURENTI, 1768),
Natrix natrix (LAURENTI, 1768) and *Natrix tessellata* (LAURENTI, 1768)**

**Pojava ponašanja poznatog kao 'death feigning' kod *Coronella austriaca*
(LAURENTI, 1768), *Natrix natrix* (LAURENTI, 1768) i *Natrix tessellata*
(LAURENTI, 1768)**

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Figure 1. Death feigning in *Coronella austriaca* from Poštak mountain (South Croatia)

Slika 1. 'Death feigning' kod *Coronella austriaca* s planine Poštak (južna Hrvatska)

Death feigning, tonic immobility or thanatosis is a form of defence behaviour in which an animal becomes immobile as if dead (MACFARLAND, 1981; GEHLBACH, 1970). Death feigning in snakes is a phenomenon when a snake is going totally limp; sometimes the tongue will dangle from the open mouth, the pupils are turned toward the lower rim of the orbit, and usually at least part of the body is turned upside down (KREINER, 2007). Many organisms, like

the grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), dice snake (*Natrix tessellata*) or mud snake, (*Farancia abacura*), defecate either during or just prior to tonic immobility (DOODY et al., 1996).

In this short report we present the first recorded finding of death feigning in *Coronella austriaca* (Poštak Mountain, South Croatia, 24.4.2011, 5586043 N, 4908235 E, 1090m a.s.l., UTM WK80). Until now, this type of antipredator behaviour in *Coronella austriaca* has never been recorded in literature. Death feigning behaviour has been known also for two European / Croatian snakes, *Natrix tessellata* and *Natrix natrix*. In Table 1. we presented and compared some of specific actions of death feigning (data from GREGORY & GREGORY, 2006; GREGORY ET AL, 2007; GREGORY, 2008).

Table 1. Comparison of some specific actions in death feigning in Croatian / European snakes

Tablica 1. Usporedba specifičnosti vezanih uz death feigning kod zmija Hrvatske / Europe

Behaviour/Species	<i>Coronella austriaca</i>	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>
On-back behavior and supination	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mouth gaping	No	Yes	Sometimes
Tongue hanging free	No	Yes	Sometimes
Defecation	No	Yes	Yes

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