

New record of the Dice Snake (*Natrix tessellata*) from Cres island, Croatia

Nalaz ribarice (*Natrix tessellata*) na otoku Cresu, Hrvatska

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Slika 1. Ribarica (*Natrix tessellata*) s otoka Cresa
Figure 1. Dice Snake (*Natrix tessellata*) from Cres island

The presence of the Dice Snake on Cres island was only mentioned once by Bruno (1980). He stated that he had seen a specimen on Lake Vrana. This was later mentioned in Gasc et al. 1997, Gruschwitz et al. 1999 and Tóth et al. (2006) in their papers on the herpetofauna of Cres Island, but without any recent observations by the authors themselves. During our field trip on Cres island on 8th of May 2013 we caught one adult Dice Snake (Fig.1), and observed two additional specimens on the eastern coastline of Lake Vrana (Fig. 2) (X= 5453036, Y= 4966254).

On most Adriatic islands the species is either rare or not present because of the lack of suitable freshwater habitats with stable fish communities, in which it is common on mainland



Slika 2. Vransko jezero na otoku Cresu, stanište ribarice
Figure 2. Lake Vrana on Cres Island, habitat of Dice Snake

Croatia below 900m a.s.l. (Jelić & Lelo 2011). The autochthonous origin of previously reported Dice Snake from islands Cres, Krk and Prvić (Bruno 1980, Souchurek 1985, Franzen 1987, Mrišić et al. 1989, Schimmenti & Fabris 2000) were not clear and possibly confused with misidentified *Natrix natrix* or once introduced *N. tessellata* on Krk (Tóth et al. 2006, Schweiger 2008, Jelić & Lelo 2011). However, in the light of well-known saline tolerance of Dice Snakes in the northern Adriatic Sea (Bonato et al. 2007, Mebert 2011a) and elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Caspian Sea (e.g., Chondropoulos 1989, Gruschwitz et al. 1999, Valakos et al. 2008, and many refs. in Mebert 2011B), and the recent rediscovery of a Dice Snake on nearby Island of Krk (Vlček 2014, in press.) an autochthonous

occurrence of the Dice Snake on Cres Island becomes much more plausible.

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