THE NOVEL COLONY OF *Podarcis siculus* IN ATHENS: IS THERE SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

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The Italian wall lizard, *Podarcis siculus*, with a native distribution in the Italian Peninsula, Sicily and the north Adriatic coast appears to be an efficient colonizer with several established introduced populations outside its range. In this study we report morphological and other characteristics of the recently located colony in Athens, the first known in Greece. The study was carried out using animals that were collected in three different attempts to remove the introduced species from the wild (October 2014, April and May 2015). Five meristic and seven metric characters were recorded for 32 adult males and 57 adult females. Mean body size (SVL) for males was 64.69 mm (n = 32, range: 51-82 mm) and for females 60.58 mm (n = 57, range: 46-75 mm). There was a clear sexual dimorphism in the population; males had significantly longer, wider and taller heads than females, bigger body size and longer legs. Concerning the reproductive traits of the population we found that clutch size ranged from 4 to 11 eggs with a mean of 6 eggs. Maximum length for oviductal eggs (n = 121) was 13.1 mm and maximum width 8.3 mm. Larger females had bigger clutches, but no other significant relation was found between the parameters studied. In the diet of the population we recorded a constant presence of plant parts: 68% of the examined stomachs in the October sample, 73% in April and 90% in the May sample. As for the invertebrate prey, Hymenoptera (winged ants) predominated in the October diet (present in the 82% of the stomachs) while Isopoda (42%), Hymenoptera (42%) and Coleoptera (32%) during May. Sand was also present in 21%, 31% and 81% of the stomachs in October, April and May respectively. Our results were discussed with respect to other populations of *P. siculus* primarily in its native range.