

Who's who in Mediterranean Lizards?

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In this work we explored patterns in lizard diversity across the five major global Mediterranean biomes. Our dataset comprised of all of those lizard species whose distributions (retrieved from www.gardinitiative.org) intersected to any degree with Mediterranean biomes (based on www.wwf.org). 707 species of lizards (or 11% of all lizards) call the Mediterranean biome their home, at least in part of their range. The Palearctic and Australian regions are the richest in lizard diversity. The Afrotropical and Australian Mediterranean regions have more lizard richness than expected by their area, and the Palearctic, Neotropic and Nearctic Mediterranean regions fewer. The Neotropic Mediterranean region has the highest proportion of endemic lizards. The Nearctic and Afrotropic regions have the smallest proportion of endemic lizards. Different lizard families dominant the lizard fauna in the different Mediterranean regions across the globe. Only skinks are an important component in the diversity in more than two regions (Afrotropics – 21%; Australian – 52%; Palearctic – 17%). *Liolaemus* dominate amongst Neotropic Mediterranean lizards (78%); true lizards the Palearctic (52%) and to a degree Afrotropic (13%); geckos are more dominant in the Afrotropics (33%) and other families comprise less than 15% of the Mediterranean lizard species diversity in their respective realms. The state of knowledge on threat for Mediterranean species, is better than the global mean (47%) with 55-60% of its species belonging to prioritisable categories (i.e. not NE, DD). The Palearctic and Afrotropic Mediterranean regions have 24% of their prioritisable species threatened by extinction, the Nearctic has the lowest percentage of threatened species - 15%. Of the 85 threatened Mediterranean lizards globally, 25 species (30%) have less than 10% of their range covered by a protected area. Altogether the Mediterranean lizard faunas of different realms have different characteristics and some species are in need of further conservation attention.