



«Actions to protect, conserve and promote biodiversity. Field studies of endemic, endangered and nationally important species of Greece». Funded by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA)

TITLE

An in-depth investigation into the diversity, ecology and conservation status of the Milos wall LiZard

(Project ID: 13664)

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ABSTRACT

The MiLiZ project studies the narrow-endemic Milos wall lizard, *Podarcis milensis*. Of the 67 Greek lizards and snakes, only six are characterized as Threatened; four are Aegean-island endemic lizards, members of the *Podarcis* genus. The Milos wall lizard, currently listed as Vulnerable, is found on the islands of Milos, Kimolos and Polyaigos, and several adjacent islets. Its actual area of occupancy is unclear, its population size is based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data from Milos and Kimolos, while the other islands and islets have not been surveyed, and habitat types have not been taken into account. Furthermore, the species includes three morphological subspecies, distributed in distinct island-groups, but conservation and management reports have neglected this intra-specific variability. The MiLiZ team will conduct extensive field-work to collect presence-data, with a modified “line-transect” protocol, and also digital photographs and tissue-samples, with minimally-invasive sampling from live animals. We aim to update and review the proposed distributions in IUCN and Article17 Reports, assess population densities and population sizes for various habitats and geographical regions, as well as the species’ total population-size. Geo-referenced records will be used to generate habitat suitability maps and model which climatic aspects mostly affect the species’ distribution. Tissue-samples will be used in a preliminary DNA analysis that will help delineate the levels of genetic diversity and detect cryptic lineages that may render a different taxonomic and conservation status. Geometric Morphometric analysis on head-photographs will be used to test for sex dimorphism and re-evaluate the geographic and taxonomic variation within *P. milensis*. With MiLiZ, we aim to assess the biodiversity of un-surveyed parts of the Aegean, set conservation priorities and generate genetic resources to be further developed in the future.
