

*Coronella austriaca* (LAURENTI, 1768)  
from the Croatian Island of Cres

*Coronella austriaca* (LAURENTI, 1768) which inhabits most parts of central and northern Europe becomes rare towards the Mediterranean zone in the south (see ENGELMANN 1993). In coastal Croatia this snake is known from the Dinaric and Velebit Mountains and the Istra Peninsula (ENGELMANN 1993; VÖLKL & KÄSEWIETER 2003), while records from Adriatic islands are rare and refer to Brač and Krk only (ENGELMANN 1993). From the northern Kvarner island of Cres, however, *C. austriaca* has not yet been reported (comp. for example RATHBAUER 2002; TÓTH et al. 2006).

In June 2007 the author observed an adult individual of *C. austriaca* (Fig. 1) at the Eco-trail in the northern part (vicinity of Beli) of the island of Cres (45°08'10.0"N; 14°19'53.4"E; 312 m a.s.l.). The snake was found lying in the penumbra under a bush on a clearing surrounded by forest. Typical plants of this place were *Crataegus* sp., *Quercus cerris*, *Qu. pubescens*, *Ostrya carpinifolia* and *Carpinus orientalis*. For more details on the vegetation and climate of Cres Island see SEHNAL & SCHUSTER (1999) and TÓTH et al. (2006). The glade featured both rocky and sparsely vegetated places (Fig. 2). The weather was quite cloudy and calm and the temperature about 25 °C.

The sympatric herpetofauna was represented by two species restricted to the humid submediterranean climate, *Podarcis muralis muralis* (LAURENTI, 1768) and *Zamenis longissimus* (LAURENTI, 1768).

Prior to that, in 2002, another Smooth Snake has been reported from the island by a staff member of the University of Vienna, Department of Conservation Biology, Vegetation Ecology and Landscape Ecology (P. ZOLDA, pers. communication). However, the record locality was doubtful in that the underlying photograph could not explicitly be assigned to a certain location.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** The author is grateful to Christoph RIEGLER (Wien) and Yvonne SCHNEEMANN (Wien) for their company on this trip.

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Fig. 1: *Coronella austriaca* (LAURENTI, 1768). First record from the northern Kvarner Island of Cres (Croatia).



Fig. 2: Habitat of *Coronella austriaca* (LAURENTI, 1768) near the village of Beli in the north of Cres Island, Croatia (45°08'10.0"N; 14°19'53.4"E; 312 m a.s.l.).

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**KEY WORDS:** Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Colubridae: *Coronella austriaca*, Cres Island, Croatia, new island record

**SUBMITTED:** September 15, 2007

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