

BREVI NOTE / SHORT NOTES

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FROM BIRD WATCHING TO REPTILE WATCHING:
THE SICILIAN POND TERRAPIN *EMYS TRINACRIS* (*Reptilia Emydidae*)
LIVES IN THE COASTAL WETLAND PANTANO DI MARINA DI MODICA
(S.C.I. ITA080008)

Dal Bird-Watching al Reptile-Watching: la Testuggine palustre siciliana Emys trinacris vive nell'area umida costiera Pantano di Marina di Modica (S.I.C. ITA080008)

The Sicilian pond terrapin *Emys trinacris* is a Sicilian endemism (TURRISI, 2008), recognized as a full species by molecular analysis (FRITZ *et al.*, 2005). According to the Italian Red List of Vertebrates its conservation status is Endangered (RONDININI *et al.*, 2012). It is also listed in the Annex II to the Bern Convention and in the Annex I to the European Directive 79/409/EEC. In the IUCN Red List its status is Data Deficient, because it needs updating: in fact its distribution, status, threats and ecological requirements are still not completely known (van DIJK, 2016).

Therefore the observations of individuals in new sites are particularly important to outline the distribution of the species and to plan conservation activities.

Since spring of 2015 ornithological observations have been carried out in the coastal wetland Pantano di Maganuco through binoculars Zeiss 10x50 and telescopes Nikon 15-45x and Zeiss 20-75x (DUCHI, 2015, 2016). More recently some observations have been done also in the close Pantano di Marina di Modica (36°42'37"N; 14°47'01"E; WGS84). In this context some individuals of *Emys trinacris* were observed (Table I) and photographs of them have been taken through digital cameras. The individuals were sunbathing on the bank or on trees above water or on pieces of wood floating except one on 21th June that was in the water.

Table I
Individuals of the Sicilian Pond Terrapin observed at Pantano di Marina di Modica

DATE	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS
21 JUNE 2016	4
19 JULY 2016	1
26 JULY 2016	1
18 AUGUST 2016	1
13 SEPTEMBER 2016	1

These observations are the first for this species in this site: in fact this wetland is not reported in the map by TURRISI (2008) nor the species is listed in the Management Plan of the S.C.I. (PETRALIA *et al.*, 2009).

An 'action plan' is needed both to deepen the knowledge of this population (No. of individuals, population dynamics etc.) and to start conservation activities. In fact, irrespective of being a S.C.I., the area is heavily impacted by human activities, first of all by urbanization, which is still going on.

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