

Good invasion ability is not enough: Predation on the pond slider (*Trachemys scripta*) by the wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) in the Czech Republic

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The pond slider, *Trachemys scripta* is an alien and invasive species of turtle in Europe (Cadi and Joly, 2004), including the Czech Republic (Brejcha, 2015). Allochthonous populations were established in the various natural freshwater ecosystems and this species has been cited as the most widely invasive reptile species in the world (Kraus, 2009) and is listed in among 100 of the “World’s Worst” invaders (Lowe, 2000). The import of *T. s. elegans* has been banned by European Commission Regulation due to its ability to expand its range and believed negative impact on native species (Kopecký et al., 2013). Knowledge in respect to its abundance in Europe and potential interactions with native species are of hence of great value.

Here we report predation on *T. scripta* by a wels catfish *Silurus glanis*. The observation was made at a water dam Větrkovice near Kopřivnice town, Czech Republic (49.6175°N, 18.1885°E; WGS 84; 325 m elev.) on 5th October 2014 when an adult cadaver (ca 190 cm) of a wels catfish was observed floating on the surface. The dead fish was removed from the water and inside its mouth we found a dead adult female *T. scripta* (carapace length approximately 25 cm). Three quarters of the turtles body was inside of the head of the fish (Fig. 2). This finding is a new record of the distribution of the *T. scripta* in the Czech Republic (see Fig. 1).

In the Czech Republic, there are no native fresh water turtle species (the only Central European species *Emys*

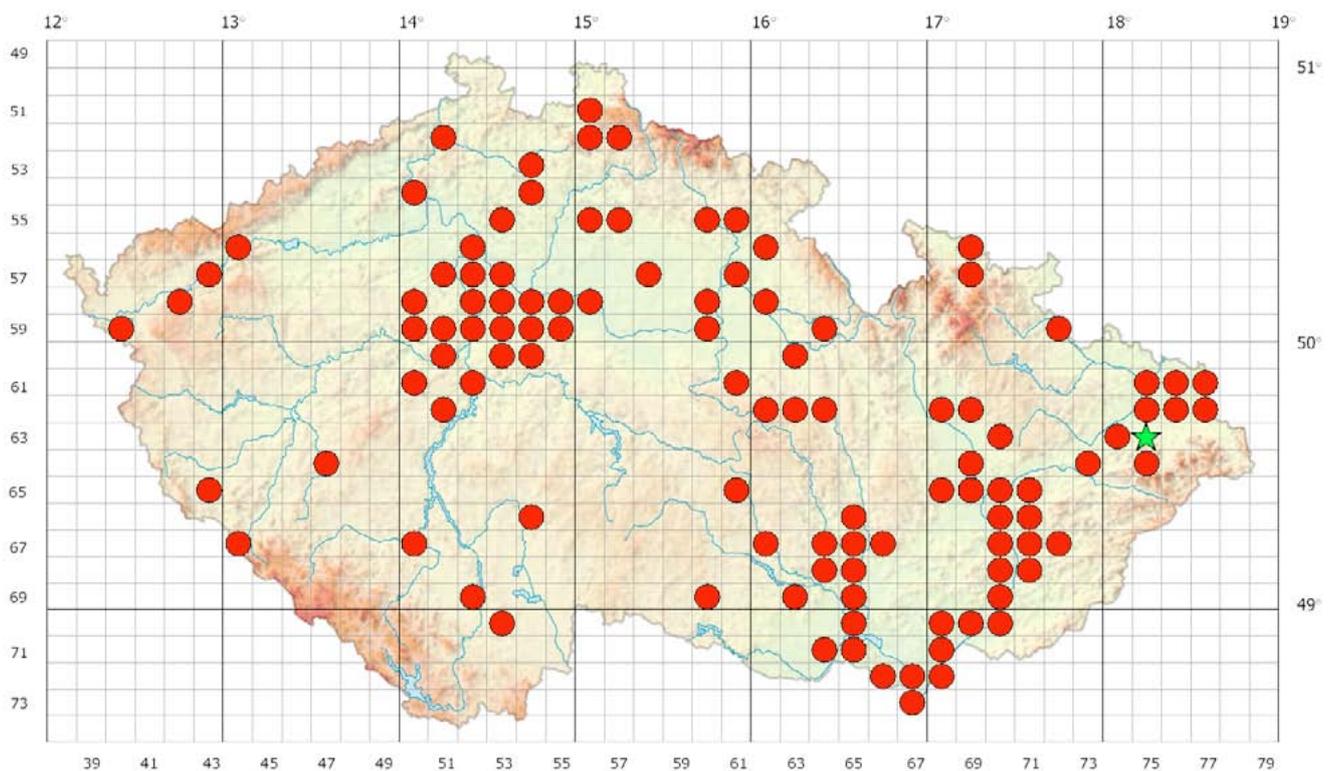


Figure 1. Occurrence of *T. scripta* in the Czech Republic (dots) with our observation (star; modified from © Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic).



Figure 2. Cadaver of *S. glanis* with dead *T. scripta* lodged in the mouth.

orbicularis is probably extinct; Moravec and Široký, 2015). Therefore, we assume that this observation was an uncommon event since freshwater turtles can only be an important part of the diet *S. glanis* when there is a high abundance of turtles and simultaneously low abundance of fish prey. Predation on the Emydid turtles or other freshwater turtle species are known predominantly from the birds (e.g. Shively, 2014) and mammals (e.g. Seigel, 1980). However, our observation could indicate that fish predation on *T. scripta* could be a factor in regulation if there was successful *T. scripta* reproduction. Juvenile turtles, for example, would be easily obtainable prey for these fish as is presented in literature (e.g. Blamires and Spencer, 2013). On the other hand, this observation could suggest that adult turtles in the food of fishes represent a potential risk of mortality from predation attempts on *T. scripta*.

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