

Zur Verbreitung der Äskulapnatter (*Zamenis longissimus*) im bayerisch-österreichischen Grenzgebiet

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Distribution of the Aesculapian snake (*Zamenis longissimus*) in the boundary area between Bavaria and Austria

The distribution of the Aesculapian snake (*Zamenis longissimus*) along the river Inn and the possible connection of the populations with those in the Danube valley has been controversy discussed among German herpetologists. Due to the increasing number of new records in this area, a transnational citizen science project, called „AG Äskulap“, was founded by members of the „Landesverband für Amphibien- und Reptilienschutz in Bayern e. V. (LARS)“. The aim of the project was to investigate the detailed boundaries of the distribution area along the rivers Danube, Inn and Salzach. The results of the project will be used to develop future actions to against habitat degradation and to identify potential range expansions caused by climate change. Based on the contributions by citizens and the transnational cooperation, a largely continuous distribution along the valleys of the rivers Danube, Inn and Salzach, up to Salzburg and surrounding areas can be postulated. The river valleys can be crossed by the snakes, but are still considered as a barrier in the northwestern part of its distribution range. This distribution could be a result of a range expansion of the Aesculapian snake during the last decades. However, this cannot be verified because of missing data from former surveys. This article presents the current knowledge about the distribution and habitats of the Aesculapian snake in the boundary area between Bavaria und Austria and suggests future conservation actions.

Key words: Aesculapian snake, *Zamenis longissimus*, Bavaria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, citizen science project, distribution, range expansion, conservation.

Zusammenfassung

Die Vorkommen der Äskulapnatter (*Zamenis longissimus*) am Inn und ihre mögliche Verbindung zu Beständen im Donautal waren in Deutschland lange umstritten. Aufgrund einer insbesondere im letzten Jahrzehnt steigenden Anzahl von Äskulapnatter-Nachweisen in diesem Raum, wurde das länderübergreifende Citizen- Science-Projekt AG Äskulap vom Landesverband Amphibien- und Reptilienschutz in Bayern e.V. (LARS) mit dem Ziel ins Leben gerufen, die Verbreitungsgrenze der Äskulapnatter entlang von Donau, Inn und Salzach erstmals näher zu erforschen. Mittelfristig sollen die Erkenntnisse dazu beitragen eine Wissensbasis zu schaffen, um auf Habitat- und eventuelle klimawandelbedingte Arealveränderungen rechtzeitig und ge-