

Die Kreuzotter (*Vipera berus*) im Venner Moor (Kreis Coesfeld, NRW)

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The adder (*Vipera berus*) in the »Venner Moor« (district of Coesfeld, North Rhine-Westphalia)

In the nature reserve »Venner Moor« in the district of Coesfeld, North Rhine-Westphalia, a comprehensive survey of the adder population was carried out in 2010. The animals were recorded with the aid of individual recognition and on the basis of 18 surveying visits to six different sample areas with a total size of 3.08 ha. Altogether, 76 different individuals were proven (25 males, 21 females, 25 subadults, 5 juveniles). These included a total of 11 partly melanistic and one fully melanistic animal. On most of these the dorsal zigzag could still be distinguished; only one female was totally pitch black. This is the first documented record of melanistic adders in North Rhine-Westphalia. The over-wintering sites were located in the old peat dams that are protected against frost and not endangered by high water. Sometimes these dams were also used as a mating site, but they were hardly suitable as summer habitat. After the mating phase the adders moved out of these dry and mostly shady locations into the variably wet former peat cutting areas. Numerous prey animals of the adder were present in these areas, particularly common frogs, field voles and common lizards. Today the greater part of the 148 ha FFH area is unsuitable for the adder due to drainage and dense forest cover. For the further development of moor regeneration and as an adder protection measure, a rise in water level is essential. However, the peat dams that serve as a key habitat must not be flooded. In order to optimise the areas with the highest adder population density and to improve other potentially suitable but forested areas, it will be necessary in the near future to thin out the tree cover.

Key words: Reptilia, adder, *Vipera berus*, distribution, habitat selection, conservation measurements.

Zusammenfassung

Im FFH-Gebiet Venner Moor im Kreis Coesfeld wurde 2010 eine umfangreiche Untersuchung zum Vorkommen der Kreuzotter durchgeführt. Mit Hilfe individueller Wiedererkennung und insgesamt 18 Begehungen wurden auf sechs verschiedenen Probestellen mit einer Gesamtgröße von 3,08 ha die Tiere erfasst. Dabei konnten 76 verschiedene Individuen (25 Männchen, 21 Weibchen, 25 Subadulte, 5 Jungtiere) nachgewiesen werden. Darunter waren insgesamt elf teilmelanistische und ein komplett melanistisches Tier. Dies ist der erste Nachweis melanistischer Kreuzottern in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Die Überwinterungsplätze befanden sich in den alten frost- und überschwemmungssicheren Torfdämmen, die teilweise auch als Paarungsplatz dienten, als Sommerlebensraum aber kaum geeignet waren. Nach der Paarungsphase wanderten die Kreuzottern aus diesen trockenen und überwiegend beschatteten