

Vipera aspis

Taxonomic Authority: (Linnaeus, 1758)

Synonyms:

Region: 1

Common Names:

Asp Viper	English
Aspiviper	German
Vipera Áspid	Spanish
vipera comune	Italian

Order: Ophidia

Family: Viperidae

Notes on taxonomy: It is possible that the subspecies Vipera a. hugyi (from Montecristo Island and southern Italy), and V.a. francisciredi (from central and northern Italy), and V.a. zinnikeri (from the Pyrenees) deserve full specific rank (Zuffi 2002; C. Corti pers. comm.). While some of these proposals might be valid, more analyses are required (Crochet and Dubois 2004). Recent studies by Ursenbacher et al. (2006), suggest that V. a. atra is not a valid subspecies.

General Information

Biome Terrestrial Freshwater Marine

Geographic Range of species:

This species ranges from north-central and northeastern Spain , through much of France (where it is absent from the north and the Mediterranean coastal area), southwestern Germany (where it is known only from a single locality in the Black Forest), western and central Switzerland, throughout Italy (including the islands of Sicily, Elba, Montecristo and others), western Slovenia and possibly northwestern Croatia. Records of this species outside of the current range need to be confirmed. It can be found up to 3,000 m asl.

Habitat and Ecology Information:

This species is found in dry, rocky areas of open scrubland, open woodlands, closed forest, hedges, pastures and stone walls. It often occurs on the edge of natural habitats, and is characteristic of chestnut woods in Italy. It can also be found in suburban areas and arable land. The females give birth to between five and 22 young.

Conservation Measures:

This species is listed on Annex III of the Bern Convention, Annex IV of the European Union Habitat and Species Directive, and is protected by national legislation in parts of its range (eg. Switzerland). It occurs in many protected areas.

Threats:

This species is threatened by loss of habitat through agricultural intensification, and to a lesser degree loss of habitat resulting from the development of tourist facilities and urbanisation. The species is often found in open areas and overgrowth of these sites is an additional threat (for example in the Jura Mountains) (Jaggi and Baur, 1999). The species is persecuted by people, and illegally collected for the pet trade.

Species population information:

It is a common species in much of its range. The species appears to be expanding its range geographically and altitudinally in France, however the extent of this change needs to be determined.

Country Distribution

	Native - Presence Confirmed	Native - Presence Possible	Extinct	Reintroduced	Introduced	Vagrant
Croatia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
France	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slovenia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spain	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Switzerland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FAO Marine Habitats

Native - Presence Confirmed	Native - Presence Possible	Extinct	Reintroduced	Introduced
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Major Lakes

Major Rivers

Upper Level Habitat Preferences

	Score
1.4 Forest - Temperate	1
3.4 Shrubland - Temperate	1
6 Rocky areas (eg. inland cliffs, mountain peaks)	1
11.1 Artificial/Terrestrial - Arable Land	2
11.2 Artificial/Terrestrial - Pastureland	1
11.3 Artificial/Terrestrial - Plantations	2

Lower Level Habitat Preferences

Score

11.4 Artificial/Terrestrial - Rural Gardens	1
11.5 Artificial/Terrestrial - Urban Areas	2

Major threats

Code	Description of threat	Past	Present	Future
1	Habitat Loss/Degradation (human induced)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.1.1	Crops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.1.1.3	Agro-industry farming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4	Infrastructure development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4.2	Human settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4.3	Tourism/recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Persecution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conservation Measures

Code	Conservation measures	In place	Needed
1	Policy-based actions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Legislation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.1	Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.1.1	International level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.1.2	National level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.2	Implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.2.1	International level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.2.2	National level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Research actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Taxonomy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Population numbers and range	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Habitat and site-based actions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.1	Maintenance/Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Protected areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.2	Establishment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.3	Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Utilisation of Species

Purpose/Type of Use	Subsistence	National	International	Other purpose:
Primary forms removed from the wild	100%	>75%	51-75%	26-50% <25%
Source of specimens in commercial trade	100%	>75%	51-75%	26-50% <25%

Trend in wild offtake/harvest in relation to total wild population numbers over last five years:

Trend in offtake/harvest produced through domestication/cultivation over last five years:

CITES:

Red Listing

Red List Assessment: Least Concern (LC) Possibly Extinct

Red List Criteria:

Rationale for the Red List Assessment: Listed as Least Concern in view of its wide distribution, tolerance of a broad range of habitats, presumed large population, and because it is unlikely to be declining fast enough to qualify for listing in a more threatened category.

Current Population Trend: Decreasing Date of Assessment: 12/17/2004

Assessor(s): Claudia Corti, Juan Pleguezuelos, Valentin Pérez-Mellado, Rafael Marquez, Marc Cheylan, Philippe Geniez, Ulrich Joger, Hans

Notes on Red listing: The subspecies *V. a. aspis* is categorised as Critically Endangered in Switzerland; *V. a. atra* is categorised as Vulnerable; and *V. a. francisciredi* is categorised as Endangered (Monney and Meyer, 2005).

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