

EUROPEAN RED LIST OF REPTILES

Milos Viper (*Macrovipera schweizeri*)

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The Milos Viper, a species endemic to the western Cyclade Islands (Greece) now has a more or less stable wild population of around 3,000 individuals. Over the last 30-40 years it has undergone significant declines as a result of collecting and traffic. It is also threatened by habitat loss through mining and quarrying concessions and fires. It is protected under international and national legislation. This species is listed as Endangered in Europe, according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.

The Milos Viper (*Macrovipera schweizeri*) is endemic to the western Cyclade Islands (Milos, Syphnos, Kimolos and Polyaiagos) of Greece. It is found in the highest point on the islands.

The population probably totals around 3,000 individuals, with about 2,500 of these on western Milos Island.

Animals can be encountered throughout the islands on dry, sunny hillsides and in traditionally cultivated land, in densely vegetated areas close to water with rocky outcrops, and also in pools of water. Its most important habitat is small creeks. The female lays a clutch of between four and 11 eggs.

The population is now more or less stable, but over the last 30-40 years there have been significant declines as a result of collecting and road kills.

It is threatened by illegal collection of animals, direct persecution when encountered, accidental mortality



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on roads and ongoing habitat loss through mining and quarrying concessions. These threats are still ongoing, but at a lower level than before as a result of regulation and conservation measures. Fires set by people and the development of its range for tourism are important emerging threats.

It is listed on Appendix II of the Bern Convention and is protected by national legislation. The entire island of Polyaiagos is protected and southern Milos is also protected by the European network of protected areas. The species has been monitored for many years. Snake tunnels under roads have been constructed at four sites, and more are planned; studies have showed that these are an effective method to reduce road kills in this species. Agreements have been reached with the local mining company to reduce road traffic, especially at night when the snakes are most active.

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