



Nocturnal Winter Activity of the Mediterranean Pond Turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*)

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Reptilian activity is primarily linked to environmental factors like temperature or precipitation (Eskew and Todd 2017). During the last decades, anthropogenic climatic change has had an enormous impact on climatic patterns, which has led to changes in ecosystems (Peñuelas et al. 2018). In these new scenarios, species are thought to acquire new adaptations (Nunez et al. 2019), including an increase in the frequency of rare behaviors.

The Mediterranean Pond Turtle, *Mauremys leprosa* (Schoepff in Schweigger 1812), is a medium-sized freshwater turtle, widely distributed across North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and southern France (Bertolero and Busack 2017). In the northeastern Iberian Peninsula, activity has usually been documented between March and late November, with a period of hibernation occurring from November to February (Franch et al. 2007; Bertolero and Busack 2017). However, these turtles engage in intermittent winter activity when the

climatic conditions are favorable, spreading their activity to almost the entire year (Franch et al. 2004; Bertolero and Busack 2017).

While sampling amphibians at 1900 h (half an hour after sunset) on 19 February 2022, we found an adult male *M. leprosa* swimming actively in a pond in Sant Feliu de Buixalleu, Girona, Spain (41.740885°N, 2.615007°E; 74 m asl; Fig. 1). The environmental temperature was 8 °C after a mild afternoon rain.

Both winter (Bertolero and Busack, 2017) and nocturnal activity (Díaz-Paniagua et al. 2015) have been documented for this species. Nevertheless, previous records of the latter in the region were concentrated in late spring (June–July; Franch et al. 2004) and occurred only during hot weather (Díaz-Paniagua et al. 2015). This sighting might be indicative of a change in the phenology of the species in the area, although further observations are necessary.



Fig. 1. The pond (left) in Sant Feliu de Buixalleu, Girona, Spain, in which an adult male Mediterranean Pond Turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*) was observed swimming after sunset in February; and the plastron of the turtle (right). Photographs by Santiago Poch.

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