

Geophagy in the Hermann's tortoise, *Testudo hermanni*

Geofagija kod čančare, *Testudo hermanni*

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Figure 1. Two adult Hermann's tortoises ingesting mud
Slika 1. Dvije odrasle jединke čančare konzimiraju meku zemlju

On June 10th 2009, on the Grabovačko hill near Trstenik (Serbia) we saw an adult male Hermann's tortoise ingesting dirt (dry soil particles). Two days later, on a dirt road in a mixed deciduous forest near the lake Čelije (foothills of the Mt. Jastrebac, Serbia), we observed two Hermann's tortoises ingesting mud from a small pool formed in vehicle tracks (Fig. 1). Geo- and lithophagy were previously reported for several tortoise species (e.g. ESQUE & PETERS, 1994; TÖRÖK, 2002), and numerous other animal groups, including humans (EILEY & KATZ, 1998). The only such report we could find concerning *T. hermanni* dates back 40 years (SOKOL, 1971). Geophagy was observed more frequently in females than in males (the need of supplementary calcium and other minerals during gestation / eggshell formation); another usual

explanation is a need for detoxification (ESQUE & PETERS, 1994; EILEY & KATZ, 1998).

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