

large scorpion. G. TROCHARD pers. comm., and in BONS & GENIEZ (1996). [locality 6 in fig. 5]

- Without date. Morocco (without precise locality). A captive adult specimen photographed. SCHLEICH et al. (1996).

- March 25, 2002. 29 km from Sidi Ifni towards Goulimine. An adult female roadkilled. This paper. [locality 7 in fig. 5].

- March 25, 2002. 16.5 km from Sidi Ifni towards Tiznit near the coastal road. An adult female under a stone. This paper. [locality 8 in fig. 5]

The snake species *Dasypeltis scabra*, *Lamprophis fuliginosus* (BOIE, 1827), *Bitis arietans* (MERREM, 1820), and *Echis leucogaster* ROMAN, 1972 are representative of a relictual Subsaharan herpetofauna isolated in southern Morocco. *Telescopus tripolitanus* (WERNER, 1909; sensu CHIPPAUX 1999), *Naja haje* (LINNAEUS, 1758) and *Crocodylus niloticus* LAURENTI, 1768 (now extinct from Morocco) are also Sahelian or Ethiopian reptile species which survived in relictual populations north of the Sahara including Morocco. All these species are very rare north of the Sahel, locally seriously threatened and need effective conservation actions to be taken imposing a high responsibility on the Moroccan government.

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KEY WORDS: Reptilia, Squamata, Serpentes, Colubridae, *Dasypeltis scabra*, Morocco, distribution, new records.

RÉSUMÉ: Les auteurs relatent la découverte de deux *Dasypeltis scabra* dans le sud-ouest du Maroc (région de Sidi Ifni) et donnent la liste des mentions de ce serpent pour le Maroc. Ils attirent l'attention sur la grande responsabilité du gouvernement marocain pour la conservation des reptiles d'origine éthiopienne présents au Maroc et gravement menacés de disparition.

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AUTHORS: Philippe GENIEZ, Laboratoire de Biogéographie et Ecologie des Vertébrés de l'École Pratique des Hautes Etudes (E.P.H.E.), Université Montpellier II, F-34095 Montpellier cedex 5, France <geniez@univ-montp2.fr>; Michel GUILLOD, Reptiles du Monde SA, Route cantonale, CH-1077 Servion, Switzerland.

## *Bufo viridis* LAURENTI, 1768 in Monti Simbruini Regional Park: altitude record for Peninsular Italy

The generally accepted maximum altitude record of *Bufo viridis* LAURENTI, 1768 in Peninsular Italy refers to few toads recorded in Calabria at 1180 m. a.s.l. (TRIPEPI et al. 1992, 1999). An earlier statement (2000 m a.s.l. in the Abruzzi) by BRUNO (1973) was never confirmed and the "Atlas of the amphibians and reptiles of the Abruzzi" specifies the maximum altitude to be 800 m in the Majella National Park (FERRI et al. 2000; L. DI TIZIO and M. PELLEGRINI pers. comm.).

We report on a population of *B. viridis* in the Monti Simbruini Regional Park (MSRP) (Latium, central Italy, fig. 1), breeding at an altitude of 1310-1330 m a.s.l.. This breeding site is the highest one known from the Abruzzi Mountains and Peninsular Italy (i.e. South of the Po River). It is part of the Fioio Creek that flows along the north-western border of the park and dries up in summer (BIGI et al. 1999; BONO P., pers. comm.). This reach crosses a wide karstic highland that is used as grazing land.

We discovered the breeding site on 13 May, 2002 and visited it once a week until 14 July, 2002. The width of the creek varied from 0.2 to 2 m and during the observation period the depth of the water was 10 - 30

cm. The bottom was covered with insoluble residual clay, and sparse vegetation. When we first arrived, the watered reach of the creek was 600 m long but during the breeding season it shrank to 500 m (first decade of June), due to the incoming drought and progressively shortened up to 150 m (end of June). In this period the creek was mainly fed by the water of three nearby meadow springs. The Green Toads were most numerous in places with slow running water and lacking vegetation. During the dry season the active population moved from the drying up lower part of the creek to the upper one. In the middle of May, the population seemed to be still in a period of intense breeding activity. On May 18, 2002, we counted 80 individuals (67 males and 13 females) along a 30 m transect. The breeding activity decreased gradually and ended by middle of June (neither toads nor calls on June 13). The first tadpolets were recorded on July 7.

The warmth of the water of the creek (26°C at the end of June compared to 7°C in the springs) certainly met with the thermal requirements of this toad species which otherwise mainly occurs in warm mediterranean and submediterranean habitats at altitudes between sea level and 500 m a.s.l. (LANZA 1983; BOLOGNA 2000).

On June 13, we observed some specimens of *Triturus carnifex* (LAURENTI, 1768), in the upper reach in a pool about 90 cm deep. These newts were also present in two of the springs. Besides, during the entire observation period, we also recorded a great number of tadpoles of *Bufo bufo* (LINNAEUS, 1758). The tadpoles of the Common Toad began to complete metamorphosis in the second decade of June, about three weeks earlier than the Green Toads' ones. So far, *B. viridis* had never been recorded in the MSRP (cf. BOITANI et al. 1999; BOLOGNA et al. 2000). The present report raises the number of amphibian species in this Park to eleven. Although the Green Toad population seems healthy, we want to focus the attention on the fact that the excessive livestock stumping and defecating into the water may cause deterioration of amphibian breeding sites (SCOCIANI 2001). For this reason we think it is necessary to adopt appropriate conservation measures, to ensure the protection of this population.



Fig. 1: Location (shaded) of the Monti Simbruini Regional Park (Latium, Central Italy) in which a high altitude population of *Bufo viridis* LAURENTI, 1768 was observed.

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**KEY WORDS:** *Bufo viridis*, regional distribution, altitudinal range, high altitude record, Abruzzi Mountains, Italy

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**AUTHORS:** Antonio ROMANO, Via E. Filiberto 181, 04100 Latina (LT), Italy < [antonioromano1@libero.it](mailto:antonioromano1@libero.it) >, Marco DE CICCO, Via del Fornetto 79, 00149 Roma, Italy < [m.decicco@tiscalinet.it](mailto:m.decicco@tiscalinet.it) >, Carlo UTZERI, Università "La Sapienza", Dip.to di Biologia Animale e dell'Uomo, Viale dell'Università 32, 00185 Roma, Italy < [carlo.utzeri@uniroma1.it](mailto:carlo.utzeri@uniroma1.it) >

### First live record of *Pelobates varaldii* PASTEUR & BONS, 1959 in the Oualidia area (Morocco)

The Moroccan Spadefoot *Pelobates varaldii* PASTEUR & BONS, 1959 is the only African member of the family Pelobatidae. It is endemic in Morocco, where its distribution is limited and its habitats are probably localised, but there is no precise evaluation of its conservation status. The major part of its known distribution is included in a triangle delimited by the towns of Larache in the north, Khemisset in the east and Mohammedia in the south (BONS & GENIEZ 1996). Outside this area, the Moroccan Spadefoot has been reported from two localities by DESTRE et al. (1989) as bone remains in pellets of the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) and African Marsh Owl (*Asio capensis*): 5 km south-west of Bir-Jdid and near the north-eastern part of the salt marshes of Oualidia (fig. 1). This latter locality marks the southernmost known record of *P. varaldii*. The cranial characteristics of *P. varaldii* make their skulls unmistakable among Moroccan anurans but one cannot exclude with certainty the possibility that these cranial remains underwent transportation through the owls and came from other localities.

This question will remain unresolved, however, one of us (PAC, together with Alban GUILLAUMET) observed and photographed an adult female of *P. varaldii* on the road 1337, 15 km south-east of Oualidia (fig. 2). The animal has not been collected. This observation was made on 9 May, 2001, at night, shortly after a rain shower during a humid and mild period. The surrounding habitat was made up of meadows and degraded oak (*Quercus*) forests or *Cistus* matorral with small streams in the bottoms.

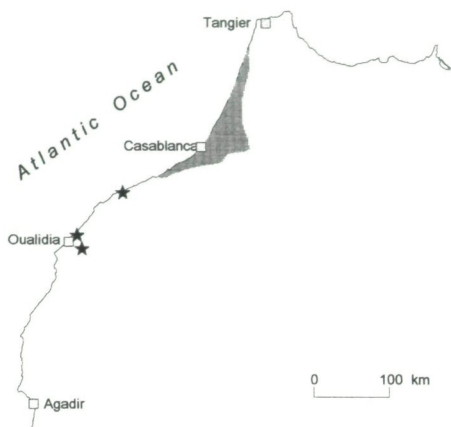


Fig. 1: Known geographical distribution of *Pelobates varaldii* PASTEUR & BONS, 1959 according to BONS & GENIEZ (1996) and personal observations.

The asterisks indicate the three southernmost populations (Bir Jdid, salt marshes of Oualidia, and 15 km south-east of Oualidia).

Other amphibian species observed nearby during the same night and the following morning were *Bufo mauritanicus* SCHLEGEL, 1841, *Bufo viridis* LAURENTI, 1768 and *Hyla meridionalis* BOETTGER, 1874. This observation confirms the presence of this rare species 190 km south-west of the nearest populations where living specimens of *P. varaldii* had been observed in the past. Moreover, it stresses the exceptional but seriously threatened biodiversity of the area between El Jadida and Cape Beddouza.



Fig. 2: *Pelobates varaldii* PASTEUR & BONS, 1959 female, 15 km south-east of Oualidia (Morocco). Photograph by P.-A. CROCHET.

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