Hematology of Triturus karelinii (STRAUCH, 1870), from Gallipoli, Turkey

In Turkey, the Southern Crested Newt, Triturus karelinii (STRAUCH, 1870), is found in the north and west of the country, from sea level to 2,100 m a.s.l. (BAŞOĞLU et al. 1994; BARAN & ATATÜR 1998). Studies on its taxonomical status and distribution (BAŞOĞLU et al. 1994; BARAN & ATATÜR 1998), age structure (OLGUN et al. 2005), and ecology (OLGUN et al. 2005; MERMER et al. 2008) are available, whereas hematological information is confined to blood cell size and morphology (ATATÜR et al. 1998; ARIKAN & Çiçek 2010). The purpose of this study was to provide data on cell counts, hemoglobin contents, hematocrit, mean cell volume, mean cell hemoglobin and mean cell hemoglobin concentration of T. karelinii.

Seven female specimens collected on April 26, 2010, from the vicinity of Gelibolu-Çanakkale (NW Turkey) at the altitude of sea level during the species' breeding season were anaesthetized with ether prior to cardiac ventricular puncture. Blood samples of the live specimens were obtained in the laboratory within one day after capture using heparinized hematocrit capillaries.

Erythrocytes (RBc, [per mm³]) and leucocytes (WBc, [per mm³]) were counted manually with a Neubauer hemocytometer. Erythrocytes were diluted in standard Hayem's solution, whereas for leucocytes the preparation method of JERRETT & MAYS (1973) was used, applying aliquots of 1/5000 neutral red solution and 12 % formaline in 0.07 % physiological saline. The latter method is a slight modification of Blain’s method (STURKIE 1954). Hematokrit value (HCT, [%]) was determined by the micro-hematocrit method. The tubes were spun in a micro-hematocrit centrifuge for 5 minutes at 13,000 rpm and the packed cell volume was calculated with a hematocrit reader. Hemoglobin concentration (Hb, [g/dl]) was measured colorimetrically with a Sahli hemoglobinometer. In this apparatus, 100 % corresponds to 14.5 g Hb / dl blood (TANYER 1985). The derived values ‘mean cell volume of an erythrocyte’ (MCV = HCT / 100*RBC, [fl]), ‘mean cell hemoglobin’ (MCH = Hb / RBC, [pg]) and ‘mean cell hemoglobin concentration’ (MCHC = Hb*100 / HCT, [%]) were calculated according to WINTROBE (1933). Descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS (ver. 10.00) statistical package. Sample size was seven in all counts and calculations.

Results are summarized in Table 1. In the blood samples, mean erythrocyte and leucocyte counts per mm³ were 202,133±14,964.9 and 2,092±80.46, respectively. Hemoglobin concentration was 9.70±1.50 g/dl, mean hematocrit value was 24.50±3.50 %, mean cell volume of an erythrocyte was estimated to be 1,055.92±31.03 fl, mean cell hemoglobin was 417.19±7.24 pg, and mean cell hemoglobin concentration was calculated to be 39.52±0.48 %.

In poikilothermic vertebrates, the use of erythrocyte counts as an indicator of physiological conditions should be regarded reliable only if large samples are taken. This is necessary since the number of erythrocytes per mm³ is regulated by feedback mechanisms which work at a high level of precision in animals that maintain constant body temperatures and have high rates of tissue metabolism, which does not apply to amphibians and reptiles (HUTCHISON & SZARSKI 1965). The number of erythrocytes per mm³ in amphibian circulating blood shows a wide individual variation and considerable interspecies differences (HUTCHISON & SZARSKI 1965; SZARSKI & CZOPEK 1966) as well as a dependence on weight, age, sex, habitat conditions and season (ARVY 1947; GONIadowsKA 1973; ZHUkOvA & kUBANTSEv 1979; SIHNA 1983; RUÍZ et al. 1989; WOJTASZEK et al. 1997).

ATATÜR et al. (1998), who studied Lissotriton vulgaris (LINNÆUS, 1758),
Salamandra salamandra (Linnaeus, 1758), Triturus karelinii, Ommatotriton ophryticus (Berhold, 1846), Lyciasalamandra luschani (Steindachner, 1891) and Mertensiella caucasica (Waga, 1876), mentioned individual variation concerning erythrocyte size but not sexual dimorphism.

The erythrocyte count of T. karelinii was highest in comparison with other Turkish salamandrid species shown in Table 1. Leucocyte counts vary depending on species, season, sex, nutritional and physiological conditions such as health and breeding status (Arikан 1989; Rouf 1969; Wojtaszek & Adamowicz 2003). In T. karelinii, the number of leucocytes varied within a wide range between 1,800 and 2,266 per mm$^3$, which was similar to the other salamandrid species shown in Table 1.

Among the Turkish salamandrid comparative species, T. karelinii showed the highest values of RBc, Hb and MCHC and the lowest of HcT, Mcv and MHC. Values of RBc, Hb and MCHC were lowest in Lyciasalamandra fazilae (Table 1). In conclusion, the hematological parameters of the Southern Crested Newt appear fairly different to other urodelan species mentioned in the literature.


KEY WORDS: Amphibia: Urodela: Salamandridae; Triturus karelinii, hematological parameters, Turkey

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