

SEH Grant in Herpetology – Mapping and Distributions 2015 – Report Mapping the herpetofauna of Albania

In 2015 we were granted by SEH to map the amphibian and reptile fauna of Albania, a country which is located in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot and has a rich herpetofauna. The knowledge of species distributions in the country especially in remote areas is scarce. The number of observations is limited compared to other European countries and many of them are old or ambiguous, especially for rare species. Along research on *Vipera ursinii graeca* we started mapping the herpetofauna since previous years. We have georeferenced all available published and unpublished records from the country and we created a geodatabase, which contained 3834 records from 55 species (status at the end of 2014), when we applied for the grant. Based on this database we identified areas where sampling effort was low and the species with less than ten distribution records. Four sampling areas with limited observations and five rare species were selected. Our aim was to visit these places with the help of the SEH. We applied for travelling costs of two expeditions, but we had the opportunity to organise three other trips, so we spent in total 61 days in the field in 2015. We visited all previously known locations of the rare species, except the locality of *Tarentola mauritanica* which is now without possible access. In the Prokletije Mountains we collected new records of *Dinarolacerta montenegrina* and *Zootoca vivipara*, but we failed to find *Salamandra atra*. We successfully found *Podarcis melisellensis*, *Podarcis sicula* in North Albania, and *Eryx jaculus* in the Middle-Albanian Adriatic coast, these occurrences were old or ambiguous. Near Prespa Lake we collected records of *Pelobates syriacus* for the first time in Albania, but we could not verify the historical reports of *Testudo graeca*. Despite our efforts we were unable to collect new records of *Dalmatolacerta oxycephala* around Shkodra Lake. Overall we collected 267 new records for

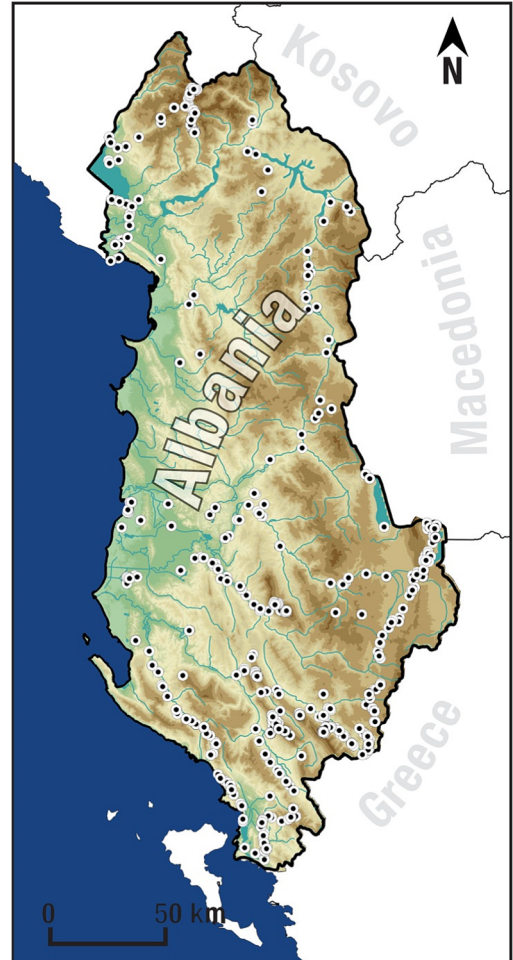


Figure 1. Amphibian and reptile records collected in 2015 with the help of the SEH Grant in Albania.

amphibians and 503 new records for reptiles with a total of 770 from 43 species (fig. 1). Currently our dataset comprises 4720 records from 56 species. This database has been given to the SEH Mapping Committee and will be part of the New Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles of Europe (<http://na2re.ismai.pt>). Further, one article on the distribution and diversity of reptiles will be published in *Amphibia-Reptilia*

and one on amphibians is in the publishing process.

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