

The herpetofauna of Lebanon: new data on distribution

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Abstract. This paper reports more than 400 original data on the Lebanese herpetofauna (covering 5 amphibians and 44 reptiles), deriving from museum collections and recent field observations. The most interesting data concern: (a) *Cyrtopodion amictopholis*, a species known only from Mt. Hermon, reported for the first time from Mt. Lebanon Range; (b) *Lacerta fraasi*, previously considered endemic to the Mount Lebanon Range, also recorded from Antilebanon; (c) the occurrence of *Macrovipera lebetina* is confirmed with certainty from two localities in the north. New records are given for many species known in Lebanon only on the basis of very few and often old reports.

Kurzfassung. In dieser Arbeit werden über 400 unveröffentlichte Daten zu 5 Amphibien- und 44 Reptilien-Arten des Libanon mitgeteilt, die auf Museumssammlungen und eigenen Feldbeobachtungen basieren. Die Daten umfassen, unter anderem, folgende interessante Feststellungen: (a) *Cyrtopodion amictopholis*, eine Art, die bisher nur vom Mt. Hermon bekannt ist, wurde erstmals im Gebiet des Mt. Lebanon gefunden; (b) *Lacerta fraasi*, die bisher als endemisch für das Gebiet des Mt. Lebanon angesehen wurde, wurde nun auch im Antilibanon festgestellt; (c) das sichere Vorkommen von *Macrovipera lebetina* wird an zwei Stellen im Norden des Landes bestätigt. Für viele Arten, die aus dem Libanon nur aufgrund sehr weniger und häufig alter Zitate bekannt sind, werden neue Nachweise gemeldet.

Key words. Levant, Middle East, zoogeography, faunistics, Amphibia, Reptilia.

Introduction

The herpetofauna of Lebanon is rich in terms of number of species, but their distribution is relatively poorly known. In fact, most of the taxa are known only from a limited number of localities. This paper is a first step towards a revised checklist of the Lebanese herpetofauna (see IN DEN BOSCH 1998), and it summarises the results of the recent fieldwork by the authors, who have also brought together most of the distributional data available in the literature. In this preliminary paper, we present more than 400 unpublished museum and field data. As the aim of this paper is to enhance our knowledge of the distribution of Amphibians and Reptiles, notes are limited to the distribution aspects.

Material and methods

In listing species, we use trinomial nomenclature for species considered as polytypic and binomial for monotypic species. Comments on nomenclatorial problems will be discussed in a further paper in preparation. Nearly all the material in Lebanese collections and the observations of HB and RS were collected in the last ten years; those of MCC and other observations (SSV, SSSV)