

New occurrence record of the Algerian ribbed newt *Pleurodeles nebulosus* (Guichenot, 1850) in Algeria

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The taxonomic status of the Algero-Tunisian *Pleurodeles* was reanalysed and classified in two genetically and morphologically distinct forms; *Pleurodeles poireti* restricted to the population of the Edough Peninsula (northeastern Algeria) and *Pleurodeles nebulosus* representing all other populations in northern Algeria and Tunisia (Carranza & Wade, 2004; Merabet et al., 2016). In Algeria *P. nebulosus* is present in humid, sub-humid and semi-arid Mediterranean areas (Mateo et al., 2013). Several authors have suggested that it is present from the wilaya of Mascara in the west through to Tunisia in the east (Fig.1). However its occurrence within this range is very limited due to fragmented habitat and little is known about the connectivity of the different known populations (e.g. Mateo et al., 2013).

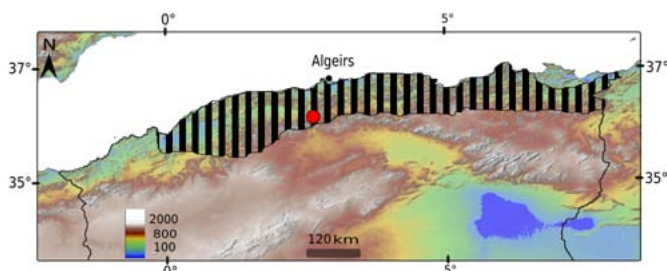


Figure 1. Distribution map of *P. nebulosus* (Guichenot, 1850) in Algeria. Shaded area, supposed range according to Veith et al. (2004). Red dot represents the new site discovered.

During field work in northern Algeria (22 May 2014), we discovered the species in one new area of occurrence in the lake Dhaya of Tamezguida (36.3677532 N, 2.6929010 E) in the wilaya of Medea (Fig. 1). This new record represents the first report of species occurrence in this region. The site is a large pond (Fig.2A) situated in an oak forest at 1185 m above sea level. We found large numbers of larvae at the first stages of development with a total length not exceeding 18 mm (we got larvae in each dip net shot) but only one adult (male) was found under a stone at 10 meters from the water body (Fig.2B).

The reproduction site of *P. nebulosus* in Tamezguida is situated in forest habitat within the National park of Chrea. According to national park officers, the site is subject to fire, overgrazing and anthropogenic pressure such as hiking. This discovery may increase our understanding about the distribution patterns of *P. nebulosus* in Algeria. Such new sites are especially important in drawing conclusions about

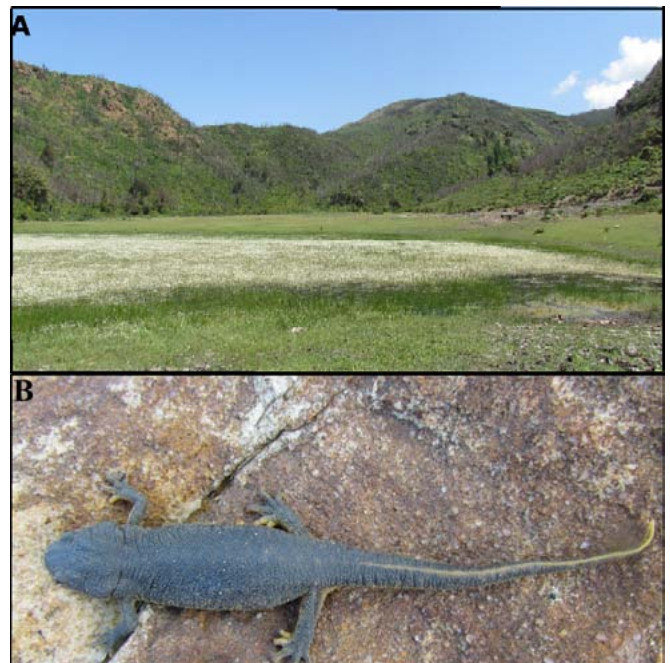


Figure 2. A) The pond where larvae of *P. nebulosus* were found. **B)** An adult specimen of *P. nebulosus* found in the lake Dhaya in Tamezguida.

the connectivity with other known or potentially occupied sites for this species and thus better react to the threats affecting its existence.

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