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Original Research Paper

CHECKLIST OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF MONTENEGRO AND THEIR CONSERVATION STATUS

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SYNOPSIS

This paper presents an updated checklist of Amphibians and Reptiles of Montenegro. The checklist contains 52 species (including two species complexes), compiled from published literature and personal field surveys. Species complexes are the *Anguis fragilis* complex and the *Lacerta viridis* complex. *Trachemys scripta* is introduced, while *Podarcis siculus* is potentially introduced species. Migratory species include three sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas* and *Dermochelys coriacea*). Additionally, there are four potentially present species (*Proteus anguinus*, *Mediodactylus kotschyi*, *Tarentola mauritanica* and *Podarcis tauricus*), which presence is doubtful or still not confirmed with certainty in Montenegro. National and international protection as well as conservation status of Amphibians and Reptiles is given.

Ključne riječi:
batrahofauna, herpetofauna, spisak vrsta, Crna Gora, Balkansko poluostrvo.

SINOPSIS

ČEK LISTA VODOZEMACA I GMIZAVACA CRNE GORE I NJIHOV KONZERVACIONI STATUS

Ovaj rad predstavlja ažurirani spisak vrsta vodozemaca i gmizavaca Crne Gore. Lista sadrži ukupno 52 vrste (uključujući dva kompleksa vrsta) i ažurirana je na osnovu literaturnih podataka i ličnih terenskih istraživanja. Kompleksi vrsta su *Anguis fragilis* complex i *Lacerta viridis* complex. *Trachemys scripta* je introdukovana, dok je *Podarcis siculus* potencijalno introdukovana vrsta. U migratorne vrste spadaju tri vrste morskih kornjača (*Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas* i *Dermochelys coriacea*). Četiri vrste su potencijalno prisutne (*Proteus anguinus*, *Mediodactylus kotschyi*, *Tarentola mauritanica* i *Podarcis tauricus*), njihovo prisustvo je upitno ili još uvijek nije sa sigurnošću potvrđeno u Crnoj Gori. Takođe je dat i pregled statusa zaštite i konzervacioni status vodozemaca i gmizavaca prema nacionalnoj i internacionalnoj legislativi.

INTRODUCTION

A species checklists are lists of taxa known to occur in a given geographical area and period. They have a long tradition in biology as a means to summarize and communicate biogeographic and other information (Reyserhove et al., 2020). Among checklists, species are mainly listed according their scientific names. Some of the most popular species checklists are those related to species conservation status (e.g. CITES or IUCN Red list). Species checklists are a crucial source of information for research and policy (Reyserhove et al., 2020).

The Balkan Peninsula is one of the European biodiversity hotspots, and centers of endemism,

among which "Adriatic Triangle" (Montenegro and NW Albania) is one of the richest area in terms of batracho- and herpetofauna (Džukić & Kalezić, 2004).

First surveys of the Montenegrin batracho- and herpetofauna date back to the end of XIX century, beginning of XX century (e.g. Werner, 1898; Tomassini, 1905; Karaman, 1921; 1928). From that time up to today, exist a lot ot of studies or reports focused on diversity of batracho- and herpetofauna of inland and coastal part of Montenegro (Radovanović, 1951; 1964; Brelih & Džukić, 1974; Henle, 1985; Henle & Klaver, 1986; Haleš, 1988; Džukić, 1991; 1995; Crnobrnja-Isailović & Džukić, 1995; 1997; Džukić et al., 1997; Ćirović & Adžiablahović, 1998; Tomović et al., 2000; Crnobrnja-Isailović, 2002; Mayer & Podnar, 2003; Tomović et al., 2003; Ajtić et al., 2005; Krčmar et al., 2007; Ljubisavljević et al., 2007; 2018; Ćirović et al., 2008a; 2008b; Dömpke, 2008; Jovanović, 2009; Polović & Ljubisavljević, 2010; Stanković, 2012; Caković & Milošević, 2013; Polović & Čađenović, 2013; 2014a; 2014b; Žagar et al., 2013; Čađenović, 2014; Gvozdenović & Iković, 2015; Gvozdenović & Čavor, 2015; Gvozdenović et al., 2016; 2021a; 2021b; 2021c; Iković et al., 2016; Verligov et al., 2016; Zagora, 2016; Drašler, 2017; Katnić et al., 2017; Kogoj, 2017; Crnobrnja-Isalović et al., 2018; Iković & Gvozdenović, 2018; Wielstra et al., 2018; Gvozdenović, 2020; Ljubisavljević & Iković, 2020).

It is known that today in the information age is easier and quicker to publish species checklists through various digital platfoms. Ajtić et al. (2004) created first online database with a checklist of Montenegrin herpetofauna but unfortunately this web-page is not available anymore.

Since currently there is no systematic checklist of batracho- and herpetofauna of Montenegro (neither digital, nor written forms), the main goal of this paper is to give systematic list of officially confirmed Amphibian and Reptile species of Montenegro, and additionally, their national and international protection and conservation statuses.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The checklist of Amphibians and Reptiles of Montenegro is compiled using a previous list of Ajtić et al. (2004), records from scientific literature (including also different reports and studies), and by field surveys conducted by authors of this paper in last 10 years. During our field surveys methodology included active searching and visual observation of species along defined transects and observation of road killed specimens. For aquatic turtles, traps – *hoop-nets* were used (Mali et al., 2014). Traps were baited with hot dogs, and checked on the end of each day. With bait, plastic bottles were placed inside the traps to ensure that they are on the surface of water body, so turtles caught in traps can breathe. For tritons, hand nets and fisheries pots were used.

Species identification was done according to standard herpetological literature (Arnold & Ovenden 2002). Taxonomy and nomenclature of all species were given according to Speybroeck et al. (2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

List of Amphibian and Reptile species of Montenegro

Class **Amphibia** Linnaeus, 1758

Order Caudata Scopoli, 1777

Family Salamandridae Goldfuss, 1820

Genus *Ichthyosaura* Sonnini and Latreille, 1801

1. ***Ichthyosaura alpestris*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Alpine Newt; Planinski mrmoljak

Genus *Lissotriton* Bell, 1839

2. ***Lissotriton graecus*** (Wolterstorff, 1906) – Greek Smooth Newt; Grčki mrmoljak

3. ***Lissotriton vulgaris*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Smooth Newt; Obični mrmoljak

Genus *Salamandra* Garsault, 1764

4. ***Salamandra atra*** (Laurenti, 1768) –

Alpine Salamander; Crni daždevnjak

5. ***Salamandra salamandra*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Fire Salamander; Šareni daždevnjak

Genus *Triturus* Rafinesque, 1815

6. ***Triturus macedonicus*** (Karaman, 1922) – Macedonian Crested Newt; Makedonski mrmoljak

Order Anura Duméril, 1805

Family Bombinatoridae Gray, 1825
Genus *Bombina* Oken, 1816

7. ***Bombina variegata*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Yellow-bellied Toad; Žutotrbi mukač

Family Bufonidae Gray, 1825

Genus *Bufo* Garsault, 1764

8. ***Bufo bufo*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Common Toad; Obična krastača

Genus *Bufotes* Rafinesque, 1815

9. ***Bufotes viridis*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Green Toad; Zelena krastača

Family Hylidae Rafinesque, 1815

Genus *Hyla* Laurenti, 1768

10. ***Hyla arborea*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Common Tree Frog; Gatalinka

Family Ranidae Batsch, 1796
Genus *Pelophylax* Fitzinger, 1843

11. ***Pelophylax ridibundus*** (Pallas, 1771) – Marsh Frog; Velika zelena žaba

12. ***Pelophylax shqipericus*** (Hotz, Uzzell, Günther, Tunner and Heppich, 1987) – Albanian Pool Frog; Skadarska zelena žaba

Genus *Rana* Linnaeus, 1758

13. ***Rana dalmatina*** Fitzinger in Bonaparte, 1838 – Agile Frog; Šumska žaba

14. ***Rana graeca*** Boulenger, 1891 – Greek Stream Frog; Grčka žaba

15. ***Rana temporaria*** Linnaeus, 1758 – Common Frog; Livadska žaba

Class **Reptilia** Laurenti, 1768

Order Testudines Linnaeus, 1758

Family Cheloniidae Oppel, 1811
Genus *Caretta* Rafinesque-Schmaltz, 1814

16. ***Caretta caretta*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Loggerhead Turtle; Glavata morska kornjača

Genus *Chelonia* Brongniart, 1800

17. ***Chelonia mydas*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Green Turtle; Zelena morska kornjača

Family Dermochelyidae Fitzinger, 1843 (1825)
Genus *Dermochelys* de Blainville, 1816

18. ***Dermochelys coriacea*** (Vandelli, 1761) – Leatherback Turtle; Kožasta morska kornjača

Family Testudinidae Batsch, 1788
Genus *Testudo* Linnaeus, 1758

19. ***Testudo hermanni*** Gmelin, 1789 – Hermann's Tortoise; Šumska kornjača

Family Geoemydidae Theobald, 1868
Genus *Mauremys* Gray, 1869

20. ***Mauremys rivulata*** (Valenciennes, 1833) – Balkan Terrapin; Riječna kornjača

Family Emydidae Rafinesque, 1815
Genus *Emys* Duméril, 1805

21. ***Emys orbicularis*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – European Pond Terrapin; Barska kornjača

Genus *Trachemys* Agassiz, 1857

22. ***Trachemys scripta*** (Thunberg in Schoepff, 1792) – Pond Slider (Red-eared Slider for ssp. *elegans*); Crvenouha kornjača

Order Squamata Oppel, 1811

Family Gekkonidae Oppel, 1811
Genus *Hemidactylus* Oken, 1817

23. ***Hemidactylus turcicus*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Turkish Gecko; Kućni gekon

Family Lacertidae Batsch, 1788
Genus *Algyroides* Bibron and Bory de Saint-Vincent, 1833

24. ***Algyroides nigropunctatus*** (Duméril and Bibron, 1839) – Dalmatian Algyroides; Ljuskavi gušter

Genus *Dalmatolacerta* Arnold, Arribas and Carranza, 2007

25. ***Dalmatolacerta oxycephala*** Duméril and Bibron, 1839 – Sharp-snouted Rock Lizard; Oštroglavi gušter

Genus *Dinarolacerta* Arnold, Arribas and Carranza, 2007

26. ***Dinarolacerta montenegrina*** Ljubisavljević, Arribas, Džukić and Carranza, 2007 – Prokletije Rock Lizard; Prokletijski gušter

27. ***Dinarolacerta mosorensis*** Kolombatović, 1886 – Mosor Rock Lizard; Mosorski gušter

Genus *Lacerta* Linnaeus, 1758

28. ***Lacerta agilis*** Linnaeus, 1758 – Sand Lizard; Livadski gušter

29. ***Lacerta trilineata*** Bedriaga, 1886 – Balkan Green Lizard; Balkanski zelembać

30. ***Lacerta viridis*** complex; Zelembać

Genus *Podarcis* Wagler, 1830

31. ***Podarcis melisellensis*** (Braun, 1877) – Dalmatian Wall Lizard; Dalmatinski zidni gušter

32. ***Podarcis muralis*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Common Wall Lizard; Zidni gušter

33. ***Podarcis siculus*** (Rafinesque-Schmaltz, 1810) – Italian Wall Lizard; Italijanski zidni gušter

Genus *Zootoca* Wagler, 1830

34. ***Zootoca vivipara*** (Jacquin, 1787) – Viviparous Lizard; Živorodni gušter

Family Scincidae Oppel, 1811
Genus *Ablepharus* Fitzinger in Eversmann, 1823

35. ***Ablepharus kitaibelii*** Bibron and Bory de Saint-Vincent, 1833 – Snake-eyed Skink; Kratkonogi gušter

Family Anguidae Gray, 1825

Genus *Anguis* Linnaeus, 1758

36. ***Anguis fragilis*** complex; Slepić

Genus *Pseudopus* Merrem, 1820

37. ***Pseudopus apodus*** (Pallas, 1775) – Glass Lizard; Blavor

Family Typhlopidae Merrem, 1820
Genus *Xerotyphlops* Hedges, Marion, Lipp, Marin and Vidal, 2014

38. ***Xerotyphlops vermicularis*** (Merrem, 1820) – Worm Snake; Slijepa zmija

Family Psammophiidae Boie, 1827
Genus *Malpolon* Fitzinger, 1826

39. ***Malpolon insignitus*** (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1827) – Eastern Montpellier Snake; Mrki smuk

Family Natricidae Bonaparte, 1840
Genus *Natrix* Laurenti, 1768

40. ***Natrix natrix*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Grass Snake; Bjelouška

41. ***Natrix tessellata*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Dice Snake; Ribarica

Family Colubridae Oppel, 1811
Genus *Coronella* Laurenti, 1768

42. ***Coronella austriaca*** Laurenti, 1768 – Smooth Snake; Smukulja

Genus *Dolichophis* Gistel, 1868

43. ***Dolichophis caspius*** (Gmelin, 1789) – Caspian Whip Snake; Stepski smuk

Genus *Elaphe* Fitzinger, 1833

44. ***Elaphe quatuorlineata*** (Bonnaterre, 1790) – Four-lined Snake; Četvoroprugasti smuk

Genus *Hierophis* Fitzinger in Bonaparte, 1834

45. ***Hierophis gemonensis*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Balkan Whip Snake; Balkanski smuk

Genus *Platyceps* Blyth, 1860

46. ***Platyceps najadum*** (Eichwald, 1831) – Dahl's Whip Snake; Šilac

Genus *Telescopus* Wagler, 1830

47. ***Telescopus fallax*** (Fleischmann, 1831) – Cat Snake; Mačija zmija

Genus *Zamenis* Wagler, 1830

48. ***Zamenis longissimus*** (Laurenti, 1768) – Aesculapian Snake; Eskulapov smuk

49. ***Zamenis situla*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Leopard Snake; Leopardov smuk

Family Viperidae Oppel, 1811
Genus *Vipera* Garsault, 1764

50. ***Vipera ammodytes*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Nose-horned Viper; Poskok

51. ***Vipera berus*** (Linnaeus, 1758) – Adder; Šarka

52. ***Vipera ursinii*** (Bonaparte, 1835) – Meadow Viper; Šargan

An updated checklist of batracho- and herpetofauna of Montenegro counts 52 species (including two species complexes). There is 15 amphibian species belonging to two orders and five families, and 37 reptile species (including two species complexes) belonging to two orders and 14 families. Two species complexes are: *Anguis fragilis* complex and *Lacerta viridis* complex.

Anguis fragilis and *A. graeca* are treated as complex (*Anguis fragilis* complex) because further research regarding taxa distinction are required (Sillero et al., 2014, Jablonski et al., 2016). *Lacerta viridis-bilineata* complex, which occur in the Western Balkans including Montenegro, are treated as *Lacerta viridis* complex because further taxonomy evaluation is required (Marzahn et al., 2016). As described in Ljubisavljević et al. (2018), Montenegrin heterogeneous mountain topography and proximity to the Mediterranean are important factors in shaping genetic diversity of these two species complexes.

Two reptile species are introduced/potentially introduced (*Trachemys scripta* and *Podarcis siculus*). *T. scripta* ssp. *elegans* is introduced on a few localities in Montenegro (Žagar et al., 2013; Iković Vuk, unpublished field data). *T. scripta* is one of the world's 100 most invasive species (Lowe et al., 2000). It is native to Eastern, Northern and Central America (Ficetola et al., 2009), and introduced worldwide via the pet trade. *P. siculus* is potentially introduced species in Montenegro (Ljubisavljević et al., 2005; 2018). Origin of this species is Italy (Stamenković, 2013).

Migratory species include three sea turtles: *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas* and *Dermochelys coriacea*. *C. caretta* is the most common sea turtle species in Montenegrin coastal waters (Gvozdenović & Iković, 2015; Gvozdenović et al., 2016; 2021b; 2021c), while only two records of both *C. mydas* and *D. coriacea* are confirmed in Montenegrin coastal watres (Kosić, 1896; 1899; Gvozdenović & Iković, 2015; Gvozdenović et al., 2016; 2021b; 2021c).

Additionally, four species can be considered as potentially present in Montenegro: *Proteus anguinus*, *Mediodactylus kotschyi*, *Tarentola mauritanica* and *Podarcis tauricus* (Radovanović, 1951; Bruno, 1988; Polović & Ljubisavljević 2010; Gorički et al., 2017; Crnobrnja-Isalović et al., 2018; Ljubisavljević et al., 2018). *P. anguinus*, despite much speculation, is still not confirmed in the Dinaric Karst of Montenegro. There is no physical evidences of its presence, while results of molecular analysis are quite uncertain (Gorički et al., 2017). *M. kotschyi* is also species for which physical evidences are still not confirmed in Montenegro. This species is known from border regions of north-west Albania (Haxhiu, 1998; Mizsei et al., 2017; Crnobrnja-Isalović et al., 2018). As Ljubisavljević et al. (2018) mentioned, it is likely that *M. kotschyi* will be discovered in Montenegro in upcoming years, due to the presence of suitable habitats in south-eastern Montenegro and lack of barriers to dispersal of the species. *T. mauritanica* and *P. tauricus* records are old (Radovanović, 1951; Bruno, 1988) and considered as doubtful as their presence in Montenegro has not been confirmed during recent decades.

T. mauritanica is easily transported by humans and regarding Speybroeck et al. (2016) it is introduced to the Adriatic coast and Greece, while *P. tauricus* is known from border regions of north-west Albania (Haxhiu, 1998;

Table 1. The list of amphibian and reptile species of Montenegro, national/international protection and conservation status.

Scientific name	Protection on national level[1]	Protection on international level[2]			IUCN[3]	Synonym
		Habitat directive	Bern Convention	CITES		
Ichthyosaura alpestris	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Triturus alpestris*
Lissotriton graecus	-	-	Appendix III	-	-	
Lissotriton vulgaris	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Triturus vulgaris*
Salamandra atra	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Salamandra salamandra	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Triturus macedonicus	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	-	*Triturus carnifex*
Bombina variegata	-	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Bufo bufo	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Bufotes viridis	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	*Bufo viridis*
Hyla arborea	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Pelophylax ridibundus	+	Annex V	Appendix III	-	LC	*Rana ridibunda*
Pelophylax shqipericus	+	-	Appendix III	-	VU	*Rana shqiperica*
Rana dalmatina	-	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Rana graeca	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	
Rana temporaria	-	Annex V	Appendix III	-	LC	
Caretta caretta	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	Appendix I	VU	
Chelonia mydas	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	Appendix I	EN	
Dermochelys coriacea	-	Annex IV	Appendix II	Appendix I	VU	
Testudo hermanni	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	Appendix II	NT	
Mauremys rivulata	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	-	-	*Mauremys caspica*
Emys orbicularis	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	-	NT	
Trachemys scripta	-	-	-	-	-	
Hemidactylus turcicus	-	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Algyroides nigropunctatus	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	
Dalmatolacerta oxycephala	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	*Lacerta oxycephala*
Dinarolacerta montenegrina	-	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Dinarolacerta mosorensis	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix III	-	VU	*Lacerta mosorensis*
Lacerta agilis	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	
Lacerta trilineata	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	

Lacerta viridis complex	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Podarcis melisellensis	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	
Podarcis muralis	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Podarcis siculus	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	*Podarcis sicula*
Zootoca vivipara	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Lacerta vivipara*
Ablepharus kitaibelii	-	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Anguis fragilis complex	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Pseudopus apodus	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	*Ophisaurus apodus*
Xerotyphlops vermicularis	-	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Typhlops vermicularis*
Malpolon insignitus	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Malpolon monspessulanus*
Natrix natrix	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Natrix tessellata	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	*Coronella tessellata*
Coronella austriaca	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Dolichophis caspius	-	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	*Coluber caspius*
Elaphe quatuorlineata	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	-	NT	
Hierophis gemonensis	+	-	Appendix III	-	LC	*Coluber gemonensis*
Platyceps najadum	+	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	*Coluber najadum*
Telescopus fallax	-	Annex IV	Appendix III	-	LC	
Zamenis longissimus	+	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	*Elaphe longissima*
Zamenis situla	+	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	-	LC	*Elaphe situla*
Vipera ammodytes	-	Annex IV	Appendix II	-	LC	
Vipera berus	-	-	Appendix III	-	LC	
Vipera ursinii	-	Annex II, IV	Appendix II	Appendix I	VU	

[1]**Protection on national level:** Službeni list RCG 76/06, 12 December 2006.
[2]**Protection on international level:** ***Habitat Directive*** – Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wildlife and flora Habitats Directive - 92/43/EEC, Annex II – animal and plant species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation, Annex IV – animal and plant species of community interest in need of strict protection, Annex V – animal and plant species of community interest whose taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures (Council of the European communities, 1992; ***Bern Convention*** – Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, Appendix II – strictly protected fauna species, Appendix III – protected fauna species (Council of Europe, 1979); ***CITES*** – The convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, Appendix I – species threatened with extinction, and trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances, Appendix II – species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival (CITES, 2021).
[3]**IUCN:** The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2021-2; LC – least concern, NT – near threatened, VU – vulnerable, EN – endangered (IUCN, 2021).

Mizsei et al., 2017; Crnobrnja-Isalović et al., 2018), so it is likely that the both species will be discovered/reconfirmed in upcoming years.

Although *Pelophylax lessonae* is mentioned as present in Montenegro by some authors (Crnobrnja-Isalović & Džukić, 1997; Dömpke, 2008; Jovanović, 2009; Polović & Čađenović, 2014a), species is not included in the checklist. According to Ljubisavljević & Iković (2020) this species is based on morphology and calling very similar to the *P. shqipericus*, so its mention is doubtful. In addition to this is also a fact regarding *P. lessonae* distribution. The southern boundary of *P. lessonae* distribution range in Balkan Peninsula is Pannonian and Vlaška Plain (Kuzmin et al., 2009). Also, according to the molecular analysis presence of *P. lessonae* is not confirmed in Montenegro (Vucić et al., 2018; Zimić et al., 2020).

Regarding molecular analysis, region of Skadar Lake, Zeta River and Tivat field are inhabited by *Pelophylax kurtmuelleri* (Vucić et al., 2018; Zimić et al., 2020). As the validity of this species has not been accepted by the batrachologists (e.g. Speybroeck et al., 2016; 2020; Crnobrnja-Isalović et al., 2018) due to small genetic distance and the lack of clear morphology characteristics on the basis of which the Balkan frog could be distinguished from the Marsh frog (Ljubisavljević & Iković, 2020), we consider it as *Pelophylax ridibundus* in this paper.

Species conservation status

National legislative

In total 11 amphibian and 26 reptile species listed in this checklist are protected by law in Montenegro (Službeni list RCG 76/06) (Table 1). List of protected species is adopted in 2006 and needs revision in context of consistency, as well as concerning taxonomy and nomenclature, especially because for some subspecies (*Lissotriton vulgaris graecus* and *Triturus carnifex macedonicus*) taxonomic status was elevated to the species rang (Arntzen et al., 2007; Wielstra et al., 2018), one new steno-endemic species was described (*Dinarolacerta montenegrina*) (Ljubisavljević et al., 2007) and one new species was found recently (*Ablepharus kitaibelii*) (Verligov et al., 2016). Additionally, some illogicals among this list of pretected species are related to *Proteus anguinus* and *Pelobates fuscus*. *P. anguinus* is listed as protected in Montenegro (Službeni list RCG 76/06), even this species is potentially present in Montenegro (Gorički et al., 2017). *P. fuscus* is also listed as protected in Montenegro (Službeni list RCG 76/06), although distribution range of this species excluded Montenegro at all (Agasyan et al., 2009). Also any member of family Viperidae has not been protected. As Crnobrnja-Isalović et al. (2018) mentioned, such errors and discrepancies clearly need to be amended in accordance with international conventions (e.g. status of *Vipera ursinii*).

International legislatives

Eight out of 15 amphibian and 27 out of 37 reptile species listed in this checklist are included in Annexes (II, IV, V) of the Habitat directive (Table 1). As *Dinarolacerta montenegrina* is steno-endemic species distributed only in Prokletije Mountain in Montenegro and Albania (Ljubisavljević et al., 2018) its evaluation regarding Habitat Directive is required. Additionally, evaluation of the *Pelophylax shqipericus* and *Lissotriton graecus* is also required, as those species are Balkan endems. *P. shqipericus* extent of occurrence is 10 387 km^2, its distribution is severely fragmented, and there is continuing decline in the extent and quality of its habitat (IUCN, 2020). Taxonomic status of *L. graecus* was elevated recently (Wielstra et al., 2018), and its distribution range is now more restricted compare to previous period when it was considered as *L. vulgaris* species complex.

All species listed in this checklist (except invasive *Trachemys scripta*) are included in the appendices (II and III) of the Bern Convention (Table 1). Actually, all Europe amphibian and reptile species are included in the appendices of the Bern Convention.

Five reptile species listed in this checklist are covered by CITES appendices (I and II) (Table 1). *Testudo hermanni* is listed on Appendix II, while *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Dermochelys coriacea* and *Vipera ursinii*

are listed on Appendix I.

IUCN

According to IUCN Red list of threatened species (IUCN, 2021) most of amphibian and reptile species listed in this checklist are considered as least concern (Table 1).

Three species (*Emys orbicularis*, *Testudo hermanni*, *Elaphe quatuorlineata*) are considered as near threatened. Regarding Crnobrnja-Isalović et al. (2018) size of the overall distribution range of near threatened species and/or the quality of their habitats are already recognized as impacted by threatening factors.

Five species (*Caretta caretta*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Dinarolacerta mosorensis*, *Pelophylax shqipericus*, *Vipera ursinii*) are considered as vulnerable, while *Chelonia mydas* is considered as endangered. Marine turtles are threatened based on criteria A (reduction in population size), while *D. mosorensis*, *P. shqipericus* and *V. ursinii* are threatened based on criteria B (geographic range).

Three species (*Lissotriton graecus*, *Mauremys rivulata*, *Triturus macedonicus*) have not been evaluated among IUCN Red list. Evaluation of those species is required in near future. Although, *D. montenegrina* is steno-endemic species, distributed only on Prokletije Mountain in Montenegro and Albania (Ljubisavljević et al., 2018), it is listed as least concern among IUCN Red list in the absence of evidence of threats (Crnobrnja-Isalović & Bowles, 2011).

CONCLUSION

With 52 amphibian and reptile species, and fact that it is very likely that new species will be discovered in the near future, and that taxonomy evaluation of *A. fragilis* complex and *L. viridis* complex will be resolved, Montenegro can be considered as amphibians and reptiles diversity hotspot. It is necessary to conduct additional field surveys in order to get evaluation or revise status for some species among IUCN Red list and Habitat Directive (e.g. *D. montenegrina, L. graecus*, *M. rivulata*, *P. shqipericus*, *T. macedonicus*).

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