



Conference Abstract

Distribution of herpetofauna in caves of Portuguese karst massifs

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Abstract

Amphibians are frequently found exploring subterranean environments. Even though in Europe there are already some reports of amphibians present in subterranean habitats, in Portugal there is a major lack of knowledge of these ecosystems, namely in the karst region. Considering the relevance of amphibians and their current conservational status, it is important to assess their presence in every potential habitat. In order to provide further knowledge over this subject a preliminary survey was carried out in two Portuguese karst massifs, Estremenho and Sicó. A total of 24 caves were surveyed and as result three species (*Tarentola mauritanica*; *Salamandra salamandra* and *Pleurodeles waltl*) were found in Estremenho karst massif, and two species (*Triturus marmoratus* and *Bufo bufo*) were observed in Sicó karst massif. Furthermore, evidences were found that *P. waltl* uses caves for reproduction, which had only been reported once in Spain. This allowed perceiving that herpetofauna species occupy caves of Portuguese karst massifs and are also using them as reproduction sites.

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