

Common spadefoot toad (*Pelobates fuscus fuscus* L.) occurrence in Dolenjska, SE Slovenia

Česnovka (*Pelobates fuscus fuscus* L.) živi na Dolenjskem

Nuša VOGRIN

Zg. Hajdina 83c, SI-2288 Hajdina, e-mail: milan.vogrin@guest.arnes.si

Abstract. In Slovenia, to our present knowledge, the common spadefoot toad *Pelobates fuscus fuscus* L. has been restricted to NE Slovenia. On May 10, 1996, a calling male was found in the Krakovski gozd forest near Sajeveci in Dolenjska, SE Slovenia.

Key words: *Pelobates fuscus*, new record, SE Slovenia

The common spadefoot *Pelobates fuscus* (LAURENTI, 1768) is common in the plains and hilly regions of central, eastern, and southern parts of eastern Europe (NÖLLERT & NÖLLERT 1992, NÖLLERT 1997). It is protected by law in most countries, but its populations continue to decline in most places (NÖLLERT 1997). The main causes for this population decline are eutrophication and the introduction of predatory fish in breeding ponds, the destruction of habitats, and farming methods (BLAB & VOGEL 1989, NÖLLERT & NÖLLERT 1992, NÖLLERT 1997). These frogs prefer open country and are found in agricultural land, sand dunes, and heath. The spawning sites are mostly permanent, smaller standing meso- to eutrophic bodies of water. The frog occurs from sea level to 810 m (ZAVADIL & al. 1995, NÖLLERT 1997).

The adults of this fossorial species are less conspicuous than most other Central European amphibians, and the species may therefore go undetected. It has been assumed for a long time that the species is limited to the Prekmurje region in northeastern Slovenia (SKET 1967, 1992a,b, VOGRIN 1997a). The species also has been found near the river Drava near Ormož (Janžekovič unpubl.), in Rački ribniki Landscape Park on Dravsko polje (VOGRIN 1997b).

On May 10, 1996, a calling male of *Pelobates f. fuscus* was found near the Krakovski gozd forest near Sajeveci in Dolenjska, SE Slovenia. It was found in a semi-permanent pond partly vegetated by *Typha latifolia* situated in a wet meadow at the edge of the forest. The habitat is similar to other descriptions of habitat in the literature (ARNOLD & BURTON 1980, NÖLLERT & NÖLLERT 1992, NÖLLERT & GÜNTHER 1996, NÖLLERT 1997). Southern smooth newts (*Triturus vulgaris meridionalis*), yellow-bellied toads (*Bombina variegata*), common toads (*Bufo bufo*), common frogs (*Rana temporaria*), and moor frogs (*Rana arvalis*) were also seen or heard.

The common spadefoot was first mentioned for this region (Gorjanci, Dolenjska) about 150 years ago (FREYER 1842, cited in SKET 1992b), although SKET (1992b) thought that Freyer's data was probably erroneous. My observation, however, shows that Freyer's data (1842) may be valid, and further research may find additional sites.

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