



On the presence of Lataste's viper *Vipera latastei* Boscá, 1878 in the Central Rif, Morocco

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RESUM

Es presenta una nova cita de *Vipera latastei* al Rif central marroquí en un bosc de cedres al sud de Targuist, a uns 20 km a l'est de la citació coneguda d'Yebel Tidiquín. Els dos exemplars comparteixen el mateix genotip per a la porció del gen mitocondrial cyt b analitzat.

PARAULES CLAU: Distribució; herpetofauna; Marroc; Rif; *Vipera latastei*.

ABSTRACT

We report a new record for *Vipera latastei* in the central Moroccan Rif in an Atlas cedar forest south of Targuist about 20km east of the record from Jebel Tidiguin, both specimens share the same genotype, for the analysed portion of the mitochondrial cyt b gene.

KEY WORDS: Distribution; herpetofauna; Morocco; Rif; *Vipera latastei*.

RESUMEN

Se presenta una nueva cita de *Vipera latastei* en el Rif central marroquí en un cedral al sur de Targuist, a unos 20 km al este de la cita de Yebel Tidiquín, además ambos ejemplares comparten el mismo genotipo para la porción del gen mitocondrial cyt b analizado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Distribución; herpetofauna; Marruecos; Rif; *Vipera latastei*.

RESUME

Nous présentons ici un nouveau site d'occurrence de l'espèce *Vipera latastei* au Rif central au Maroc dans une cédraie au Sud de Targuist, situé à 20 km à l'est du site rapporté au Koudiat Tighighine. De plus les deux échantillons présentent le même génotype pour le fragment analysée du gène mitochondrial Cytb.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wir berichten über einen neuen Fundort von *Vipera latastei* aus den zentralen marokkanischen Rif-Gebirge welcher etwa 20km östlich von jenen in Jebel Tidiguin im Atlas-Zeder Wald südlich von Targuist liegt.

Beide Populationen teilen sich den selben Genotyp für einen Teil der mitochondrialen Cyt b Gene.

ملخص

نقدم هنا موقع جديد لحيّة من *Vipera latastei* في منطقة الريف المتوسط المغربي، التي تبعد بحوالي 20 كم عن الواحدة في جبل تيديغين الواقعة جنوب تارقيس، علاوة على كلا الموقعين يشتركان في نفس النمط الجيني لجزء من الجين mitochondrial Cyt-b نوع

Lataste's viper, *Vipera latastei* is distributed throughout the Iberian Peninsula and northwest Africa. MEDIANI *et al.* (2015) included 19 locality records(*) in North Morocco excluding the Middle Atlas region, where it is to our knowledge, known to occur in at least four localities, (for example near Aïn Leuh, D. Buttle, personal communication, 2000).

In a survey of the central Rif (south of Targuist), a juvenile male *V. latastei* (fig.1) was found crossing the road P-5204 in November of 2011. This new record, situated at 30 S 378 3858 and 1800 mt. elevation, is very close to *Dahar el Milat* in a cedar forest corresponding with 30S UD 75d(#) in the UTM 5x5 Km grid system as used by MEDIANI *et al.* 2015 (see map).

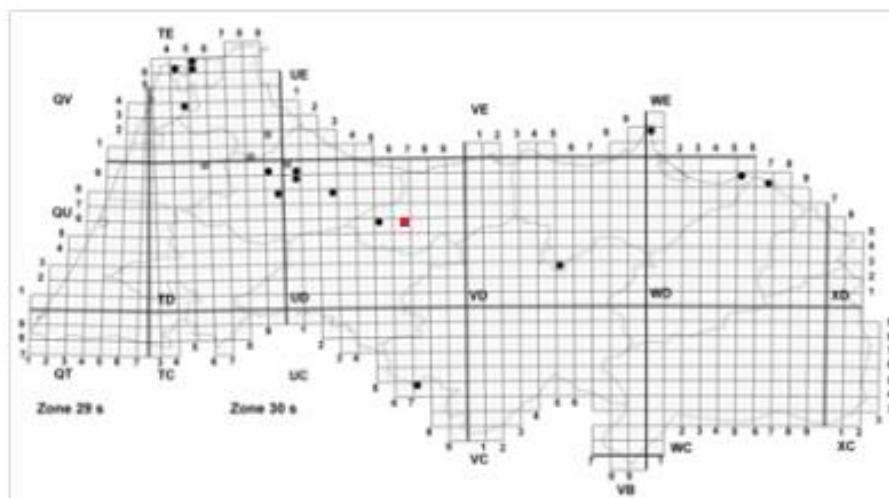
This new site, 20km east of Jebel Tidiquin (30S UD 55b) near Taleta Ketama, links with Aïn Arhbel=Agbel (either 30S VD 53a in FAHD *et al.* [2003] or 30S VD 52b in MEDIANI *et al.* [2015]) showing some continuity along the humid forested

peaks in the extension range of this viper for the main central Rif chain.

A Genbank blast of a short fraction of the mitochondrial cytochrome b sequence for our individual matched 100% the *V. latastei* sample P168 (Genbank accession JX649668) studied by VELO-ANTÓN *et al.* (2012) from Jebel Tidiquin and indicates that both samples, as expected by their close proximity belong to the same clade.

Noteworthy is that upon manipulation for photographing and tail clipping for DNA sample, the viper vomited a juvenile *Podarcis vaucheri*, lacertid known to be part of the diet of the species.

To date, we have detected *Vipera latastei*, *Podarcis vaucheri*, *Salamandra algira splendens*, *Discoglossus* cf. *scovazzi* and *Pelophylax saharicus riodeoroi* in this grid (30S UD 75d).



Map of *Vipera latastei* in North Morocco based on MEDIANI *et al.* (2015) with new record in red.

FOOTNOTES

* Reviewing published records is not the aim of this note, however caution is advised for distributional maps published not providing detailed origin (e.g. precise location, reference, picture or museum voucher) for records as on the one hand another viper, *Macrovipera mauritanica* that occurs in sympatry with *Vipera latastei* can be confused with it, and on the other hand some published data are contradictory (FAHD *et al.* [2005] vs. MEDIANI *et al.* [2015]) in spite of sharing some authors, or in our opinion are doubtful as historical records being misplaced around Tangier (MATEO *et al.*, 2003) and erroneous around Melilla (YUS-RAMOS & CABO-HERNANDEZ, 1986). We strongly recommend a critical review of all data regarding *V. latastei* in Morocco.

Letters following UTM 10 Km square grid designations indicate 5 km square quadrants. Letter “a” corresponds to lower left, “b” to upper left, “c” to lower right and “d” to upper right.



Fig.1: Juvenile *Vipera latastei* form south of Targuist. Picture by B. Klusmeyer.

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