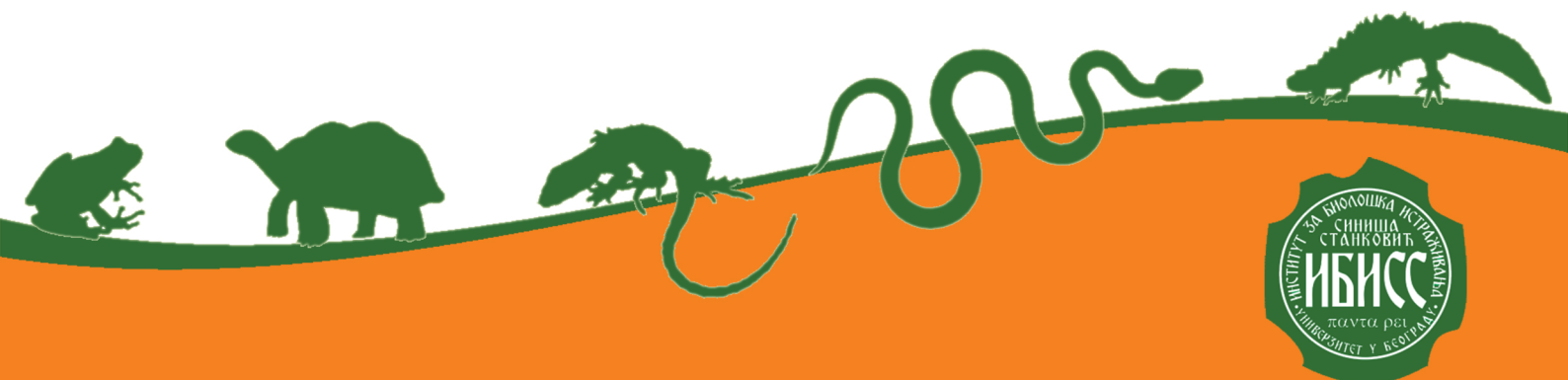




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Pathogens

Oral presentation

Occurrence of chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) and body condition in syntopic water frogs *Pelophylax shqipericus* and *P. ridibundus*

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We studied the presence of chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (*Bd*) infection in two syntopic water frogs *Pelophylax shqipericus* and *P. ridibundus* in a sample population from southern Montenegro. In total, 45 and 34 adult specimens of *P. shqipericus* and *P. ridibundus*, respectively, were tested for *Bd* infection. Here, the infection was confirmed for the first time in *P. shqipericus*, a vulnerable endemic species of the Balkans. There was a greater proportion of infected specimens in *P. shqipericus* than in *P. ridibundus* (15.6% and 2.7%, $p < 0.05$, respectively). Males and females did not significantly differ in *Bd* prevalence both within species or at genus level. Infection intensity was low in both species and body condition did not differ between infected and non-infected specimens. However, *P. shqipericus* had significantly lower body condition index than *P. ridibundus* in general, indicating elevated exposure to environmental stress in a comparison with congeneric species. The emergence of the pathogenic *Bd* fungus in the small-range threatened water frog species is worrying and indicates the need for close monitoring, urgent risk analysis, and population health assessment.