

Fig. 2. Leila blainvilliana, a rare and endangered freshwater mussel.

The almost complete lack of taxonomists working on land and freshwater molluscs and the lack of official support for their work, coupled with the lack of support for the institutions in charge of malacological collections and databases on Uruguayan diversity (mainly the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural - MNHN) are key factors limiting the availability and use of information for the conservation and management of the Uruguavan non-marine malacofauna. This has direct impact on our knowledge of species composition and distribution, and thus in disciplines relying on this basic information. This poses serious limitations on the implementation of conservation actions for these species. However, with very limited resources, and often in the context of other activities, such as education (Fig. 3), our group is carrying out surveys of unexplored areas and studies of distributions as well as preserving specimens in alcohol for DNA and anatomical studies. Synergistic links among national institutions (MNHN - DINARA (Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos) -FCIEN (Facultad de Ciencias (Universidad de la República) -NSPA) hold much promise for improvement of the current situation. In this vein, links between current research groups with strong interests in biodiversity conservation and MNHN should be strengthened, thereby serving as a nucleus to foster future conservation initiatives.

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Fig. 3. Students in the field.

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Cristhian Clavijo^{1,2}, Alvar Carranza¹, Fabrizio Scarabino^{1, 2}, Alvaro Soutullo^{1,3}

¹ Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, CC. 399, CP 11000, Montevideo, Uruguay. ² Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos, Constituyente 1497, CP 11200, Montevideo, Uruguay. ³ Grupo de Investigación Zoología de Vertebrados, Universidad de Alicante, Apartado correos 99, E-03080, Alicante, Spain. mycetopoda@gmail.com (Cristhian Clavijo, corresponding author)

<u>alvar.carranza@gmail.com</u> (Alvar Carranza)

IN SEARCH OF THE THERMAL SPRINGS SPECIES *BITHYNIA RUMELICA* AND *MELANOPSIS PARREYSSI* IN BULGARIA

By Dilian G. Georgiev

Two species of freshwater molluscs were collected during the 20th century from single localities in Bulgaria but their presence in the country has remained uncertain for a long time.

Melanopsis parreyssi Philippi, 1847, known from thermal springs in Romania (Grossu, 1956), was reported by Angelov (2000) from a spring at Pyasachnik Dam in the Upper Thracian lowland (water temperature 19° C). The material was

collected on 16 May 1962 by Professor Rusev and deposited in the collection of Professor Angelov, who published the locality in late 2000. The only thermal spring near the Pyasachnik Dam is on its western side (approximate GPS coordinates 42°24′52.41″N, 24°31′17.11″E) and this is probably the locality at which Professor Rusev collected the material.

Bithynia rumelica Wohlberedt, 1911 (Fig. 1) was described as a new species from a thermal spring (water temperature 20° C) in the Rhodopes Mountains near the town of Krichim (Wohlberedt, 1911). The only known such spring is Krichimski Vircheta, near the Vacha River (approximate GPS coordinates 41°59′51.13″N, 24°28′46.08″E) (Fig. 2). The taxonomic status of the species is unclear. It was considered a synonym of *Bithynia* (*Codiella*) *leachi* by Angelov (2000). Given the recent description of the genus *Pseudobithynia* from nearby Greece, representatives of which are very similar to species in the subgenus *Codiella* of the genus *Bithynia* (Glöer & Pešić, 2006), we cannot even be sure to which genus *B. rumelica* belongs.



Fig. 1. Drawing of *Bithynia rumelica* by Wohlberedt (1911).

In November 2008 and April 2009 the only known Bulgarian localities of *M. parreyssi* and *B. rumelica* were visited. The spring on the Pyasachnik Dam bank had been piped and its water flowed into a small pool intensively used for watering of domestic cattle. Cow footprints were visible everywhere on its bottom which was highly disturbed. Similar destruction of the benthic area was recorded at Krichimski Vircheta spring as a result of many people washing themselves in the hot water. In both springs pollution from plastic and other materials was obvious.

No individuals or even shell remains of either species were found after an intensive search (checking all types of substrates, sieving mud and sand deposits). If these localities are indeed the only ones for these species in Bulgaria, *B. rumelica* and *M. parreyssi* can be considered extinct in the country.

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Fig. 2. The type locality of *Bithynia rumelica*: Krichimski Vircheta spring, West Rhodopes, Bulgaria. (Photos: S. Stoycheva)

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Dilian G. Georgiev, Department of Ecology and Environmental Conservation, University of Plovdiv, Tzar Assen Str. 24, BG-4000 Plovdiv, Bulgaria,email: <u>diliangeorgiev@abv.bg</u>

NON-MARINE MOLLUSC SPECIES IN THE REGIONAL RED DATA BOOKS OF THE URALS AND SIBERIA (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

By Maxim E. Grebennikov & Maxim V. Vinarski

Compilation and publication of *Red Data Books* is considered to be one of the most effective approaches to biodiversity conservation (Bouchet, 1997). In the USSR, the first edition of the national *Red Data Book* was published in 1974 and two updated editions of it were issued prior to 1991. The first edition of the *Red Data Book* of the Russian Federation (formerly the Russian Soviet Federative Socialistic Republic – RSFSR) was published in 1983 (a volume devoted to plant species) and 1988 (a volume containing endangered animal species). In the same decade, some republics of the RSFSR (Buryatia, Bashkiria and several others) published their own *Red Data Books*.

In 1995, the federal law of the Russian Federation entitled 'On the Fauna' was passed. This law requires each region of Russia (there are 84 regions now in the Russian Federation) to publish its own *Red Data Book* and update it at least once within 10 yr. Sixty regional *Red Data Books* were published by 2003 (Gorbatovsky, 2003) and now almost all regions of Russia have such editions.

It is not surprising that most animal taxa included in these regional editions are vertebrates, with apparent prevalence of birds and mammals. Possibly, this reflects a global trend of paying more public attention to the most attractive species. Vertebrates are well studied and public opinion doubtless acknowledges their practical and aesthetic significance. There is surely hardly anyone who would deny the importance of