

# Distress calls of *Mertensiella luschani finikensis* from Turkey (Amphibia: Salamandridae)

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**Abstract:** Distress calls of three specimens of *Mertensiella luschani finikensis* are described. The calls consist of numerous frequency-modulated harmonics. The fundamental frequency is between 0.7 and 2.9 kHz while the dominant frequency range is 0.7–7.9 kHz. Duration of the calls is 89–208 ms. It seems that distress calls in the genus *Mertensiella* are more frequent in, or are even restricted to, the Arif population of *M. l. finikensis*.

**Kurzfassung:** Schreckrufe von drei Exemplaren von *Mertensiella luschani finikensis* werden beschrieben. Die Rufe umfassen zahlreiche frequenzmodulierte Obertöne. Die Grundfrequenz liegt zwischen 0,7 und 2,9 kHz, während sich der dominante Frequenzbereich zwischen 0,9 und 7,9 kHz erstreckt. Die Rufdauer beträgt 89–208 ms. Es scheint so, dass Schreckrufe innerhalb der Gattung *Mertensiella* in der Arif-Population von *M. l. finikensis* besonders häufig auftreten oder sogar auf diese Population beschränkt sind.

**Key words:** Amphibia, Caudata, Salamandridae, *Mertensiella luschani finikensis*, distress calls, Turkey, Middle East.

## Introduction

In contrast to anurans, the acoustic repertoire of urodeles is mostly limited to non-specific sounds or distress calls. Only in individual species does sound production seem to be associated with courtship (WYMAN & THRALL 1972) or aggressive/defensive behaviours (LICHT 1973, DAVIES & BRADSTROM 1975). Distress calls are known from various salamander families (e.g. MYERS 1951, NEILL 1952, BRODIE 1977). Among Old World Salamandridae, only *Triturus* and *Pleurodeles* are known to emit sounds according to BRODIE (1977). However, in a summary of the acoustic emissions of *Salamandra salamandra*, MENGES (1951) reported on a reliable observation by L. MÜLLER that *Salamandra salamandra corsica* (= *Salamandra corsica*) regularly produces vocalizations if specimens are stressed. FELDMANN (1968) confirms the occurrence of distress calls in Central European *Salamandra salamandra terrestris*.

Vocalizations in the salamandrid *Mertensiella luschani finikensis* (Fig. 1) were first mentioned by FRANZEN (1987) and later confirmed by STEINFARTZ & MUTZ (1999). In the present paper we analyze the distress calls of this taxon for the first time.