

First record of the leech *Placobdella costata* (Hirudinoidea: Glossiphoniidae) in Turkey

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Abstract. The freshwater leech *Placobdella costata* was found in discharge channels at Elazığ, Turkey. This represents the first record for the country. The density of *P. costata* was highest in August (0.45 individuals/m²) and lowest (0.05 individuals/m²) between December and February. A detailed morphological description is given of both the internal and external features, especially the digestive system and the male and female reproductive systems.

Kurzfassung. Der Süßwasseregel *Placobdella costata* wurde in Elazığ, Türkei, in Abflutkanälen gefunden. Dies stellt den ersten Nachweis für das Land dar. Die Dichte von *P. costata* war im August mit 0.45 Individuen pro m² am höchsten, und zwischen Dezember und Februar mit 0.05 Individuen pro m² am niedersten. Es wird eine detaillierte morphologische Beschreibung der inneren und äusseren Merkmale gegeben, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf dem Verdauungssystem und den männlichen und weiblichen Fortpflanzungsorganen liegt.

Key words. Freshwater leech, morphology, density, Turkey, Middle East.

Introduction

Leeches of the genus *Placobdella* (Glossiphoniidae) are temporary bloodsucking ectoparasites which have been recorded on fish, amphibians, crocodiles and turtles (DAVIES 1991, KAESTNER 1967, YANG & DAVIES 1985a, 1985b). *Placobdella costata* (Fr. Müller, 1846) feeds primarily on freshwater turtles (KAESTNER 1967, MISHRA & GONZALES 1978, SAWYER 1986). In the Middle East, the species has previously been reported from Lake Hula in Israel (BROMLEY 1989), but has apparently not been recorded in Turkey.

In this paper, a record of *Placobdella costata* in Turkey is communicated, and a description is given of both the internal and external features, especially the digestive system and the male and female reproductive systems, complementing the descriptions given by SAWYER (1986) and DAVIES (1991). The paper also reports on the seasonal frequency of the species.

Material and methods

P. costata was collected in discharge channels of the Fisheries Research Station of the Fisheries Faculty, Fırat University, Elazığ. The study area is located 15 km north-west of Elazığ in Eastern Turkey. Specimens were collected by hand from the underside of stones, rocks, and other solid substrates in shallow water (<40 cm). For quantitative analyses, collecting was done in plots of