

EUROPEAN RED LIST OF AMPHIBIANS

Mallorcan Midwife Toad (*Alytes muletensis*)

May 2009

The Mallorcan Midwife Toad, a species thought to be extinct but rediscovered in 1977. Restricted to a very limited area in the north of Mallorca (Spain), the wild population is slowly increasing as a result of intensive recovery efforts. It is threatened by predation and competition from introduced species. A new recovery programme for the species is being developed. This species is listed as Vulnerable in Europe, according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.



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The Mallorcan Midwife Toad (*Alytes muletensis*) is part of an ancient lineage of amphibians, diverging from all others 155 million years ago. First identified from fossils that formed up to 5 million years ago in mainland Europe, this species was believed to have been extinct for over 2,000 years. In 1977 it was rediscovered in the inaccessible limestone canyons of northern Mallorca – a true “living fossil”.

Currently the species is restricted to the Sierra Tramuntana of northern Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain and is found only in small streams deeply carved into limestone mountains, generally in rock crevices and under stones.

The wild population of this species has now stabilised (500-1,500 adult pairs) and is slowly increasing as a result of intensive conservation action including reintroductions of captive-bred animals. Re-introductions have recently been suspended following the discovery of the disease chytridiomycosis in wild populations, transmitted by re-introduced captive-bred animals.

The major threats to this species are predation by the introduced Viperine Snake (*Natrix maura*), and ecological competition with the introduced Perez’s Frog (*Rana perezii*). Development of tourism and human settlements, specifically the increasing need for water resources on Mallorca (including damming and canalization of streams), are additional threats.

The species is protected by sub-national and national legislation. It is listed on Appendix II of the Bern Convention, on Annexes II and IV of the EU Habitats Directive, and on the national and sub-national Red Data Books.

The Balearic Government and Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust have undertaken captive breeding, re-introduction and other conservation initiatives and a new recovery programme for the species is now being developed.

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