

MODERN GREEK TERMS FOR AMPHIBIANS IN CRETE

by

ELWIRA KACZYŃSKA
KRZYSZTOF TOMASZ WITCZAK

ABSTRACT: This article is a lexicographical work devoted to the Modern Cretan terminology for amphibians. There are four different species of amphibians on the island of Crete. Dialectal dictionaries and scientific works suggest that the Cretans use as many as 21 different nouns for frogs or toads.

According to SAKOULIS (2008: 9), there are only four species of amphibians in Crete:

(1) Green toad, *Bufo viridis*, syn. *Pseudepidalea viridis* Laurenti 1768 (Mod. Gk. πρασινόφρυνος, Pol. *ropucha zielona*). It is completely unclear whether a different species of toad, namely *Bufo bufo* var. *spinosus* (E. common toad, Pol. *ropucha szara*), exists (or existed?) in Crete or not (see VARDINOYANNI 1995).

(2) Bullfrog, *Lithobates catesbeianus*, syn. *Rana catesbeiana* Shaw 1802 (Mod. Gk. βουβαλοβάτραχος, Pol. *żaba rycząca*, *żaba byk*). This species, which originates from North America, has been recently introduced into the island of Crete (1994). It appears exclusively in the Aghia lake (Western Crete) (SOTIROPOULOS 2010: 164; PAFILIS, VALAKOS 2012: 21).

(3) Cretan tree frog, *Hyla arborea*, ssp. *kretensis* Ahl (Mod. Gk. κρητικός δεντροβάτραχος, Pol. *rzekotka drzewna kretańska*). This subspecies is an endemic phenomenon (AHL 1931: 161; STUGREN, LYDATAKI 1986: 57; LYMBERAKIS 2005: 22 f.; ARG 2008: 95).

(4) Cretan (marsh) frog, *Pelophylax cretensis*, syn. *Rana cretensis* Beerli, Hotz, Tunner, Heppich, Uzzell (Mod. Gk. κρητικός λιμνοβάτραχος, Pol. *żaba kretańska*). This is an endemic species (BEERLI *et al.* 1994: 2–4; ARNOLD 2002: 96 f.; HALLIDAY, ADLER 2002; SAKOULIS 2008: 12; TAW 2008: 503; ARG 2008: 106 f.; SOTIROPOULOS 2010: 167 f., PAFILIS, VALAKOS 2012: 71 f.), wrongly given as *Rana ridibunda* Pallas, syn. *Pelophylax ridibundus* Pallas (E. *Eurasian marsh frog*, Pol. *żaba śmieszka*) in some earlier scientific works. This endemic species is patchily distributed in the lowlands throughout the island of Crete generally up to 100 m above sea level. It is classified as an endangered species (SOTIROPOULOS 2010: 167; PAFILIS, VALAKOS 2012: 72).