

Distribution and genetic diversity of two species of



Pelasgus (Leuciscidae) is a freshwater fish genus endemic to the Southern Balkans. The distribution of most of its species is insufficiently known. *Pelasgus* was molecularly studied only marginally, and the genetic diversity of individual species or populations, crucial for their conservation, is completely unknown. We studied distribution and genetic diversity of *Pelasgus stymphalicus* (Valenciennes 1844) and *Pelasgus marathonicus* (Vinciguerra 1921), two widespread species from southern Greece. Our data, based on cytochrome b sequences, confirmed that a number of populations whose taxonomic status had been uncertain, belong to one of these species. The distribution range of *P. stymphalicus* includes the Ionian mainland, from the Acheloos to Mornos rivers, and most of the Peloponnese, excluding the Evrotas and the headwaters of Alfios. The native range of *Pelasgus marathonicus* is the western Aegean mainland, from rivers near Athens to the Xerias river in the Pagasitikos Gulf. AMOVA showed that the genetic variance is slightly higher among than between populations. High F_{ST} values indicated a pronounced genetic differentiation of the populations in both species. There was a high proportion of private haplotypes and a very small number of shared haplotypes between populations in both species, which indicates uniqueness of each population and their susceptibility to human-induced changes.

Auteurs du document : Nuria Viñuela Rodríguez, Radek Šanda, Stamatīs Zogaris, Jasna Vukić

Obtenir le document : EDP Sciences

Mots clés : cytochrome b, Balkans, endemic species, cytochrome b

Thème (issu du Text Mining) : SCIENCES EXACTES SCIENCES HUMAINES

Date : 2020-06-24

Format : text/xml

Source : <https://doi.org/10.1051/kmae/2020019>

Langue : Anglais

Télécharger les documents : <https://www.kmae-journal.org/10.1051/kmae/2020019/pdf>

Permalien : <https://www.documentation.eauetbiodiversite.fr/notice/distribution-and-genetic-diversity-of-two-species-of0>

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