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## First record of complete albinism in a tadpole of *Pelophylax perezi* in the valencian region (Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula)

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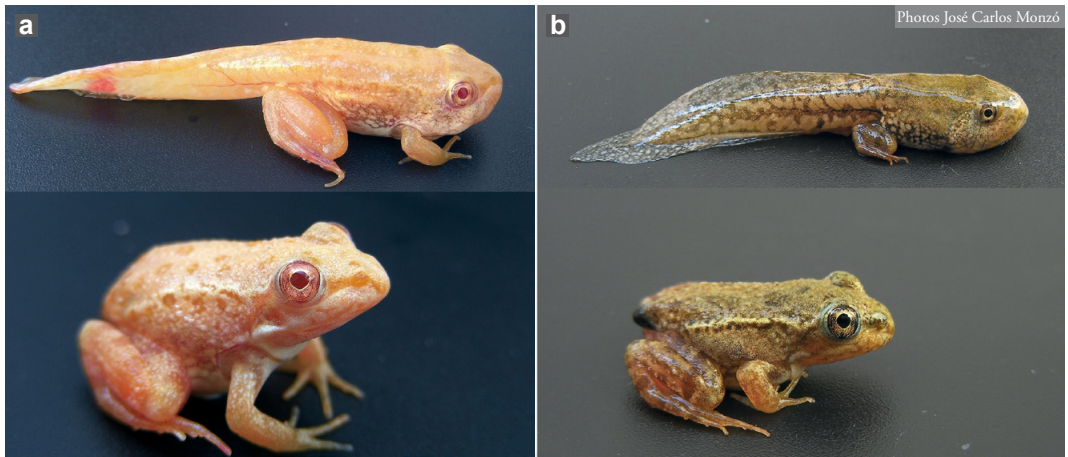
**Key words:** albinism, amphibian, *Pelophylax perezi*.

**RESUMEN:** El albinismo es una de las anomalías pigmentarias más conocidas y fácilmente detectable a simple vista. En esta nota se reporta el primer caso de albinismo en anfibios en la Comunidad Valenciana, detectado en un ejemplar de rana común (*Pelophylax perezi*) hallado en una antigua acequia restaurada de la provincia de Alicante.

Here, we report the observation of a case of complete albinism detected in an anuran of the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Albinism, a heterogeneous group of inherited melanin disorders characterized by the absence of pigmentation in the integument due to a gene mutation, is one of the most reported animal phenotypic anomalies due to its simple naked eye detection. Since the terminology used by researchers to describe pigmentation anomalies is not always coincident, in this report we follow the detailed description of albinism's subcategories of Henle *et al.* 2017. In that sense, we use the term complete albinism, which refers to individuals with whitish, golden-yellow or pinkish appearance throughout the body, and red eyes.

In July 2020 an albino tadpole of *Pelophylax perezi* was detected in the El Prado-Rodríguez wetland of the municipality of

Pinoso (Alicante; 38°22'18"N / 1°2'45"W; 545 masl). The observation took place in a restored irrigation canal with permanent slow water flow. Within the channel, the vegetation observed was composed by *Tipha* sp., *Phragmites australis*, *Chara* sp. and *Cladophora* sp., while the external plant community was dominated by *Phragmites australis*, *Tamarix canariensis* and *Suaeda vera*. The tadpole found had golden-yellowish coloration throughout its whole body with the exception of some ventral areas which presented whitish coloration. Blood vessels were easily visible, mainly in the eyes, where a red color dominated the pupil. The complete albino tadpole detected was in the 42 Gosner developmental stage (Gosner, 1960), and had a length of 48 mm (Figure 1). A daily monitoring of the irrigation channel was carried out in order to check if the tadpole reached the adult stage. After complete meta-



**Figure 1:** a) Tadpole and juvenile life stage of the albino specimen found; b) Tadpole and juvenile life stage of a specimen with normal pigmentation found at the same water point.

**Figura 1:** a) Renacuajo y juvenil del ejemplar albino encontrado; b) Renacuajo y juvenil de un ejemplar con pigmentación normal encontrado en el mismo punto.

morphosis, the body length (snout-cloaca) of the specimen was 22 mm (Figure 1).

Although we observed that the development of the specimen until adult stage was normal, its survival from there on is difficult to estimate. The study of the incidence of this phenotype in natural populations, as well as the physical abilities of these specimens, are important aspects to determine the survival rate of these individuals. However, these studies are complex to carry out because of the low number of specimens detected, and the

cost and effort of field work. This is why most cases are limited to simple reports like this.

A review of the scientific literature published on the subject (Campos-Such, 2017; Gosá & Arribas, 2017; Caballero-Díaz *et al.*, 2019; Ferreira *et al.*, 2019), make us suppose this is the first report of albinism in *P. perezi*, and more generally in amphibians, in the Valencian region. Only two previous cases in *P. perezi* have been reported in Iberian Peninsula, one adult in 2009 in Cadiz (Jiménez-Cazalla, 2011), and five larvae in Tarragona (Aguilar *et al.* in 2011).

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