

Ranavirus Alarming Spread In Portugal Endangers The Amphibians

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Serra da Estrela is the highest mountain range in the continent of Portugal. A new variety of ranavirus is currently causing mass mortality in a number of amphibian species in the said place.

The ranavirus is hypervirulent. It could also affect the fish and reptiles. Yet, according to the study of the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid, the ranavirus also infecting reptiles complicates the situation.

The ranavirus is affecting the amphibian populations in Portugal. In the year 2009, hundreds of midwife toads which are the *Alytes obstetricans* had been found dead in Serra de Estrela Natural Park.

In the journal *Scientific Reports*, a research study was published which raised a new notice on the genus of the ranavirus. It was also discovered in Spain and some places in Europe.

Jaime Bosh is a researcher at the National Museum of Natural Sciences. He is also a co-author of the study of the ranavirus. Bosh explained that "Ranaviruses have been known about for a long time, although in recent years globalization is setting off mass mortalities throughout the world, and new strains also keep appearing, probably from Asia."

The mere fact that the ranavirus could also affect fishes and reptiles had extremely complicated the situation. It is because when the ranavirus infects some fishes and the reptiles, it could easily spread according to the report from [Eurek Alert](#).

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As reported in the [Science Daily](#), the ranavirus had been infecting amphibian populations in Spain for several decades already. The scientists had discovered what had turned out to be the first known case in their country in the year 1992. At that time, they didn't exactly know which organism caused the problem.

Another strange incident of mortality arose in Serra da Estrela in the year 2011. The ranavirus did not just affect the midwife toads, but it also affected other amphibian species in the park.

The dead animals were tested and it was confirmed that it was not just about the chytrid fungi infection but they also discovered the new strain of ranavirus in all the species that had been analyzed.

Gonçalo M. Rosa from the Portuguese Centre of Ecology explained that "Viruses of this genus are found all over the world and can infect various groups of animals. But different strains have different degrees of virulence and the one circulating in the Serra da Estrela belongs to a hypervirulent group called CMTV-Ranavirus,"

The ranavirus is highly infectious. It also has the potential to affect almost all species in the system where the researchers had discovered them. It had been and will be a crucial challenge for wildlife conservation. It also makes it necessary to optimize the conservation strategies for the amphibians urgently.



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