

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LESSEPSIAN RAGGED SEA HARE, *Bursatella leachii* Blainville, 1817 (APLYSIIDAE) IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF TURKEY**Yaşar Özvarol***

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Abstract: In this study, distribution of *Bursatella leachii* Blainville, 1817 is determined in Mediterranean coast of Turkey. This report is also second report of *B. leachii* from Gulf of Antalya. One specimen of *B. leachii* was observed during SCUBA diving activity in Konyaaltı beach, at a depth of 25 m, in 29 September 2012.**Keywords:** *Bursatella leachii*, Aplysiidae, Distribution, Turkey, Mediterranean Sea**Öz:** **Lesepsiyen Ragged Sea Hare, *Bursatella leachii* Blainville, 1817 (Aplysiidae)'nin Türkiye'nin Akdeniz Kıyılarındaki Dağılım Alanları**Bu çalışmada, *Bursatella leachii* Blainville, 1817'nin Türkiye'nin Akdeniz kıyılarındaki dağılımı tespit edilmiştir. Bu aynı zamanda *Bursatella leachii* türünün Antalya Körfezi'nden ikinci bildirilişidir. *B. leachii* türü 29 Eylül 2012 tarihinde, Konyaaltı plajında yapılan SCUBA dalışı sırasında 25 m'de görülmüştür.**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Bursatella leachii*, Aplysiidae, Dağılım, Turkey, Akdeniz

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Introduction

The Turkish Levantine and Aegean Sea coast (southern coast of Turkey), where are deeply affected region by the migration of alien species in the Levantine Sea, and a great part of the studies carried out in the region are focused on alien species. According to Çınar et al. (2011), among the 400 alien species known to be distributed along the Turkish coasts, 105 species are molluscs, of which 98 species are distributed on the Turkish Levantine coast.

Although there are many studies on the molluscan fauna distributed along the Turkish Levantine coast (Swennen (1961), Falchi (1974), Blöcher (1983), Lindner (1987), Buzzurro and Greppi (1994, 1996), Buzzurro et al. (1995), Tringali and Villa (1990), Yokeş and Rudman (2004), Öztürk and Aartsen (2006), Öztürk and Can (2006) and Özvarol et al. (2010)), there are only few records related to molluscan fauna in Izmir Bay and Aegean Sea (Yokes and Rudman, 2004; Öztürk & Poutiers, 2005; Çınar et al., 2006).

In the present paper, the distribution of immigrant *Bursatella leachii* Blainville, 1817 was examined in Turkish Mediterranean shores (Turkish Levantine and Aegean coasts).

Materials and Methods

A single specimen of *B. leachii* was observed during SCUBA diving activity in Konyaaltı beach at a depth of 25 meters, 29 September 2012, in the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey (Figure 1). It is kept alive in a sample box and transferred laboratories of the Fisheries Faculty of Akdeniz University. After identification it is deposited at the Fish Museum (Sample ID: 12).

In Turkish coasts, this species was recorded firstly by Swennen (1961). Recently, some specimens of *B. leachii* were reported from Datça-Bozburun (Muğla) by Umut Tural (2004), from İnciraltı coastline by Kazak and Cavaş (2007) and Urla fishing Port Izmir Bay by Tanrıkul and Akyol (2010). Last report is provided by present study in 2012 from the Gulf of Antalya (Figure 2).

Short description: Body 8 cm. Two pair of tentacles on the broad and short head. Short and triangular tail with white bands. Body covers different shadows of brown color. Blue colored eyespots and white branched papillae scattered over the brown body.



Figure 1. *Bursatella leachii* De Blainville, 1817

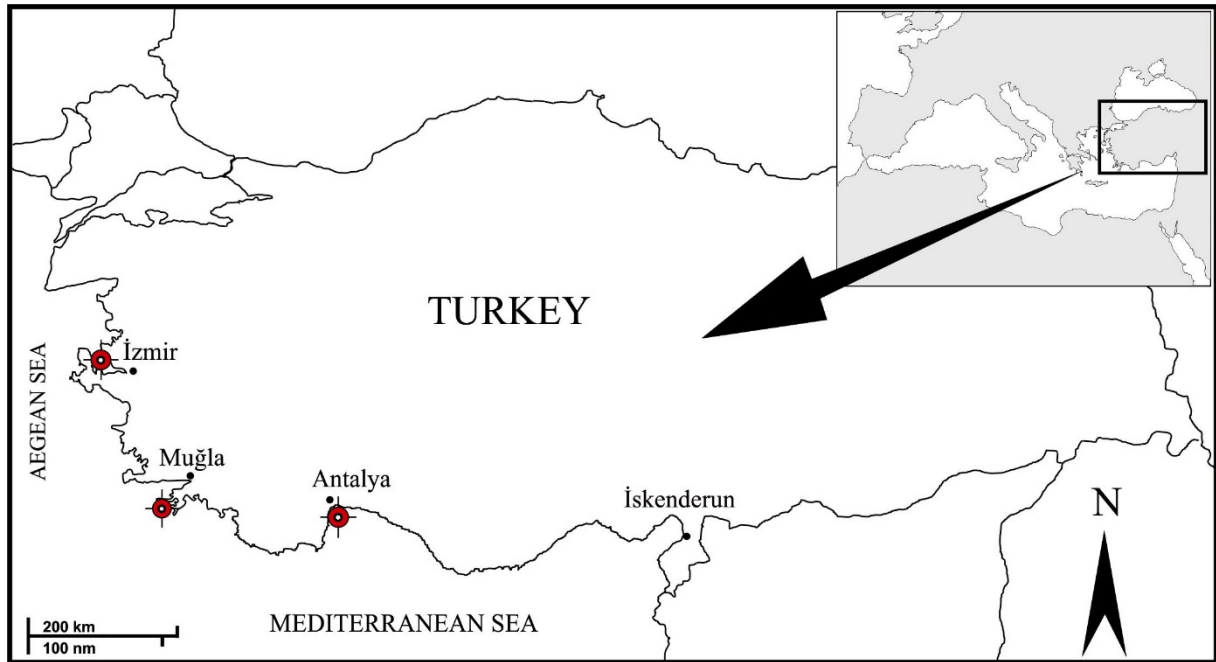


Figure 2. Map showing localities of *Bursatella leachii* in Mediterranean coast of Turkey

Results

The ragged sea hare, *Bursatella leachii* De Blainville, 1817, is a medium to large-sized (usually from 50 to 100 mm, up to 150 mm) benthic opisthobranch mollusc (Voss, 1980; CIESM, 2002). It is a circum-tropical species found nearly worldwide in warm temperate to tropical marine environments and it is common in intertidal and subtidal sheltered bay and estuarine habitats with sand or muddy bottoms, and are a frequently encountered component of tropical and subtropical sea grass and mangrove communities (Lowe and Turner, 1976).

According to CIESM exotic atlas, mode of introduction is either by ships from the tropical Atlantic or via the Suez Canal (i.e. Lessepsian), and in the Mediterranean, *B. leachii* is very common from the eastern Mediterranean Sea to the Italian coasts in the western Basin, only known from an area between Taranto Sea, Sicily, Naples, Sardinia, Malta and Tunisia (CIESM, 2002; Zakhama-Sraieb et al., 2009; Gravili et al., 2010). Despaltovic et al. (2008) reported that this species was occasionally observed in the area of the middle Adriatic (around Split and Hvar Island) in the last two decades.

Bursatella leachii, also known as immigrant the ragged sea hare, is established in Turkish Aegean Sea (Tural, 2004; Çınar et al., 2005, Kazak and Cavaş, 2007), This species was recently re-

ported several times from İzmir Bay and Datça Bozburun (Muğla).

Conclusion

It is expected that its distribution may expand along whole Turkish Mediterranean coasts.

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