

The case of *Spiroxys contortus* in European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in Poland - the first molecular confirmation

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In the 20th century a large number of turtles from North America were imported to Europe. In recent years established populations of these reptiles, coexist and compete with the native on this continent European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in the wild. Invasive turtles cause a threat to endogenous species carrying many parasites. *E. orbicularis* is a freshwater turtle reported from Western Africa, across most of Europe and in Asia Minor, registered as an endangered species in the Bern Convention. The native helminth fauna of this turtle in Poland is little known and includes the species *Spirhapalum polesianum*, *Falcaustra armenica*, *Angusticaecum holopterum*. There is only one report on the finding of the co-invasive nematode *Spiroxys contortus* in a pond turtle in this country (Łukasiak, 1939), but the species was determined only on the basis of morphological features and the occurrence of this nematode has not been molecularly confirmed. Additionally, in the literature no gene sequence of this species has been published. This work aims to confirm a possibility of invasion of *S. contortus* in *E. orbicularis* in Poland as well as presents the phylogenetic position of this nematode. In the present study we examined 4 individuals of *E. orbicularis* which died for unknown reasons. During standard parasitological dissection one female nematode was found in the stomach. The specimen was identified by morphological features and molecular analyses based on the 18S rDNA as *S. contortus*. In conclusion, the presence of co-invasive species of nematodes in European natural habitats causes a risk of transmission to native endangered species of animals as *E. orbicularis*.