

Publication MIO : Mounia Aoussi, Louiza Nesrine Sellam (MIO) , Charles F. Boudouresque (MIO), Aurélie Blanfuné (MIO), Farid Derbal, Hocine Frihi, Michéle Perret-Boudouresque, Chafika Rebzani-Zahaf, Marc Verlaque (MIO), Thierry Thibaut (MIO) -Insights into the species diversity of the genus *Sargassum* (Phaeophyceae) in the Mediterranean Sea, with a focus on a pre-viously unnoticed taxon from Algeria

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Abstract

Nine currently accepted species of the genus *Sargassum* (Phaeophyceae) have been recorded from the Mediterranean Sea : *S. acinarium*, *S. desfontainesii*, *S. flavifolium*, *S. furcatum*, *S. hornschuchii*, *S. muticum*, *S. ramentaceum*, *S. trichocarpum* and *S. vulgare*. Two of them, *S. desfontainesii* and *S. furcatum*, are Atlantic species, the Mediterranean range of which is restricted to the Alboran Sea, close to the Strait of Gibraltar. Three species, *S. hornschuchii*, *S. ramentaceum* and *S. trichocarpum* are endemic to the Mediterranean. The presence of *S. flavifolium* in the Mediterranean, a north-eastern Atlantic species, is at least in part based upon a misidentification and therefore requires confirmation. A taxon collected near Algiers and Annaba (Algeria), here referred to as '*Sargassum* sp. from Algeria', although sharing most characters with *S. flavifolium*, also presents some distinctive characters. In the absence of genetic data, confirming or not its taxonomic value, and in the lack of studies on the herbaria containing the types of many species currently considered as synonyms of *S. flavifolium*, but which are possible candidates for accommodating the Algerian specimens, the authors prefer a conservative approach. They do not describe a new species, which would be premature, but draw attention to a taxon which may be more widely distributed in the Mediterranean rather than solely along the Algerian coasts.

Keywords

Algeria ; Mediterranean Sea ; Phaeophyceae ; *Sargassum flavifolium* ; *Sargassum* spp.