

Where am I? > [Home](#) > [News](#) > [Biology](#)

Tags: [bush](#), [conservation](#), [distribution](#), [Morocco](#), [Polygala](#), [population](#), [Spain](#), [species](#)

Polygala balansae, a new bush to Europe, at risk of extinction in Spain

Science Centric | 5 May 2010 10:09 GMT

IE University, Spain

International prestige & innovation Become part of the IE community
www.ie.edu/university

InterRail - Official Site

Compare & Buy all InterRail Passes Online. Free Shipping!
www.InterRailNet.com

Top Jobs in Spain

Only Jobs From 60.000 € Access over 6,000 Headhunters
www.Experteer.com

15 Hotels in Almería

Book your hotel in Almería online. Good availability and great rates!
www.Booking.com/Almeria

Ads by Google

Researchers at the University of Granada (UGR) have studied the natural history and conservation status in Spain of the only known population of *Polygala balansae* in Europe, a thorny bush that can grow up to 1.5 metres high, which was previously thought to be exclusive to Morocco. The team of scientists is calling for it to be protected and included on the list of threatened species.

In 2006, a research team from the University of Granada (UGR) embarked upon a detailed study of the bush *Polygala balansae* in Spain. The scientists studied its distribution area, the number of individual plants and some features of its reproductive biology. The bush was declared to be a new species in Europe in the same year.

'Field sampling led to us finding only one population, despite searching a much larger area,' Juan Lorite, lead author and a researcher at the Department of Botany of the UGR, tells SINC.

The study, which was published last month in the journal *Annales Botanici Fennici*, counted 246 reproductive individuals. 'These data, along with its small area of occupation and potential threats to its population, have led to the species being evaluated as in critical danger of extinction at regional level by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),' explains Lorite.

The only population in Spain occupies 'just' 1,920 m² near Almunecar (Granada), at an altitude of 120-160 metres above sea level. This population occupies 'a small area of Mediterranean scrubland, in an environment populated by subtropical crops (avocados and custard apples),' the researcher adds.

Some of the threats facing the bush include habitat fragmentation, changing soil use, human settlement encroachment and the expansion of subtropical crops, housing developments, natural or deliberately set fires, as well as biological problems resulting from the low number of reproductive individuals in the population.

The researcher says, 'the species itself is not protected and nor is the area it occupies, meaning it should be included in future red lists of threatened species, and protective regulations introduced to cover the whole area where it is found.'

The researchers are also calling for urgent measures to protect areas where the bush could potentially grow, and where no protective guarantees are in place, such as Murcia, Almería, Granada and Málaga.

Prior to this study, the distribution area of *Polygala balansae* was thought to be limited exclusively to Morocco. The bush can be found in the High Atlas, the Western Anti-Atlas and in some parts of the Mid Atlas. It is very widely distributed in Morocco, where populations have a high number of individuals 'and so it is not under threat there,' Lorite concludes.

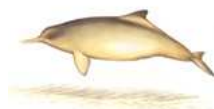
Source: [Plataforma SINC](#)



DON'T MISS —



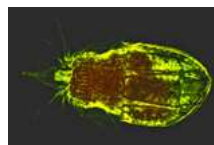
[The mushrooms - familiar or dangerous' - a new showcase in the exhibitions of the NMNHS](#) — [2 May 2010] — A new showcase, 'The mushrooms - familiar or dangerous,' can be seen in the exhibitions on the fourth floor at the National...



[Satellites, DNA and dolphins](#) — [1 May 2010] — Using DNA samples and images from Earth-orbiting satellites, conservationists from Columbia University, the Wildlife Conservation...



[New showcase in the Amphibians and Reptiles Hall at the NMNHS](#) — [1 May 2010] — A new showcase in the Amphibians and Reptiles Hall at the National Museum of Natural History, Sofia presents the most interesting...



[Microbial mat the size of Greece found on oxygen-starved South American seafloor](#) — [19 Apr 2010] — Ocean explorers are puzzling out Nature's purpose behind an astonishing variety of tiny ocean creatures like microbes and...

More [Biology](#)...

Lepidopterology

The study of butterflies and moths

[www.nmnhhs.com](#)

National Museum of Natural History, Sofia

— [Advertise here](#)

LATEST | MOST E-MAILED | ARCHIVE

Problem gamblers provoked by 'near misses' to gamble more
Maya plumbing, first pressurised water feature found in New World
Male or female? In flies, some cells can't tell
Scientists outline strategy to limit global warming
Bugging out: NC State researchers help track wayward pests through mapping
Some patients with hepatitis B faring better after liver transplant
Definitive diabetes indicator deceptively high in African-American children
How Darwin's little-known work impacts current schizophrenia and autism treatment
Important control mechanism behind autoimmune diseases discovered
Study examines incidence of gastric cancer

[More recent stories...](#)

Unravelling the roots of dyslexia
Psoriasis associated with diabetes and high blood pressure in women
UC San Diego first public university to provide its own iPhone application
New gene associated with increased risk of Alzheimer's disease
Cumulative radiation exposure shows increased cancer risk for emergency department patients
Dye-coated glass to channel energy into solar cells
Intestinal bacteria promote - and prevent! - inflammatory bowel disease
Researchers find target for pulmonary fibrosis
The upside to allergies: Cancer prevention
Native lizards evolve to escape attacks by fire ants

2007
— [I](#) [II](#) [III](#) [IV](#) [V](#) [VI](#) [VII](#) [VIII](#) [IX](#) [X](#) [XI](#) [XII](#)

2008
— [I](#) [II](#) [III](#) [IV](#) [V](#) [VI](#) [VII](#) [VIII](#) [IX](#) [X](#) [XI](#) [XII](#)

2009
— [I](#) [II](#) [III](#) [IV](#) [V](#) [VI](#) [VII](#) [VIII](#) [IX](#) [X](#) [XI](#) [XII](#)