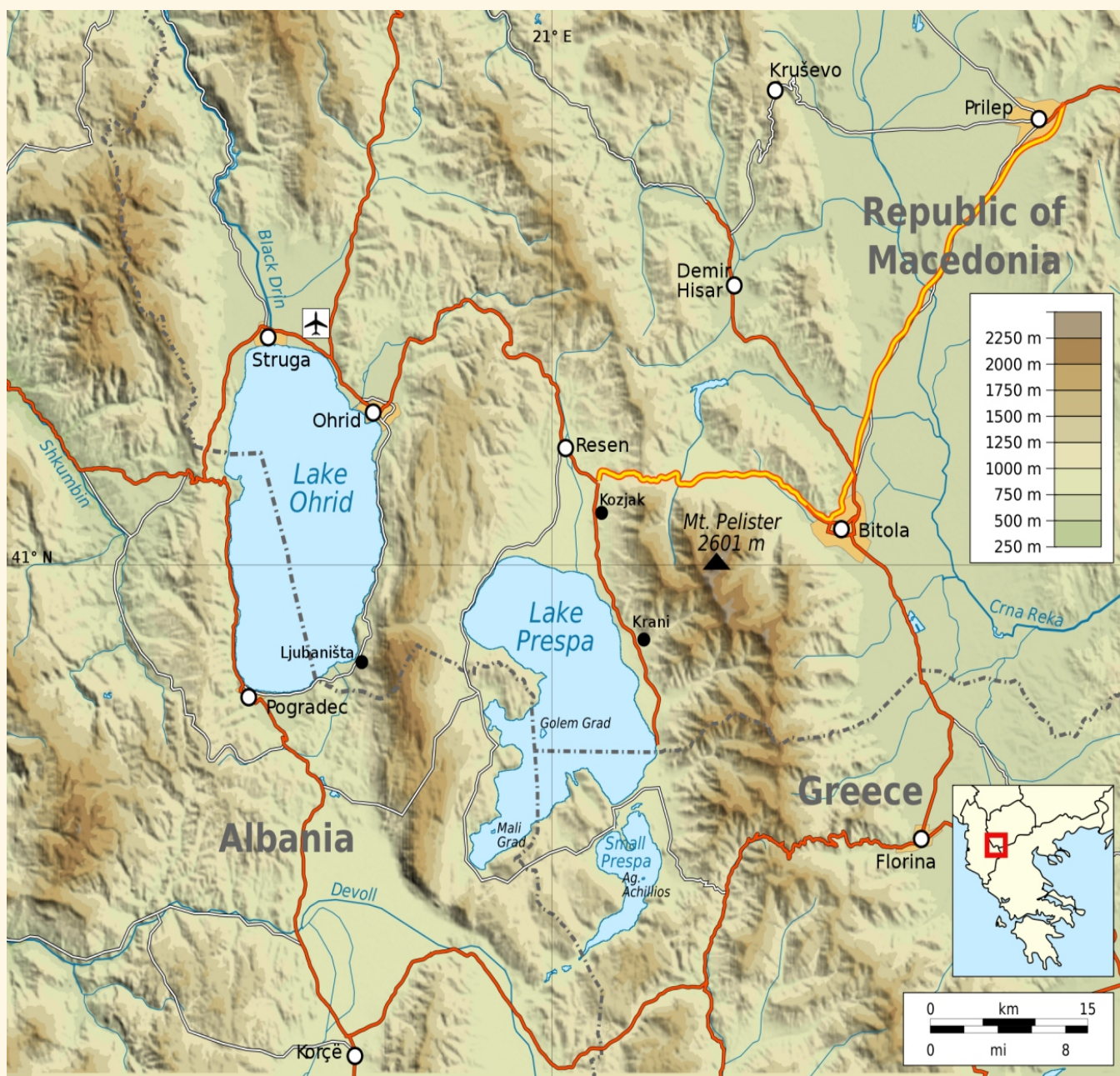
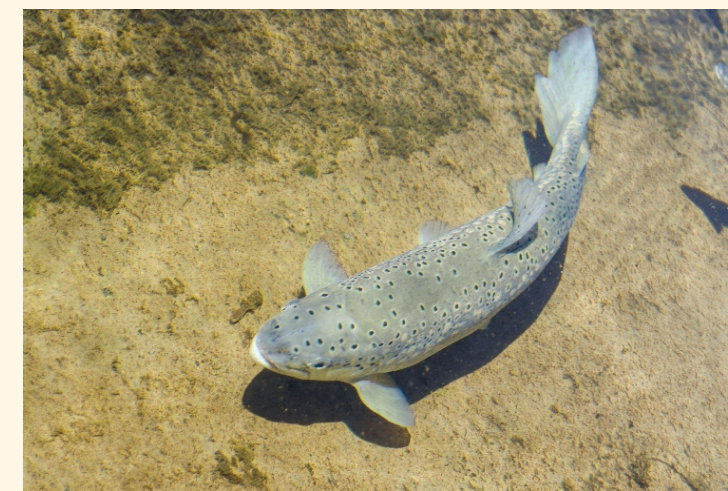




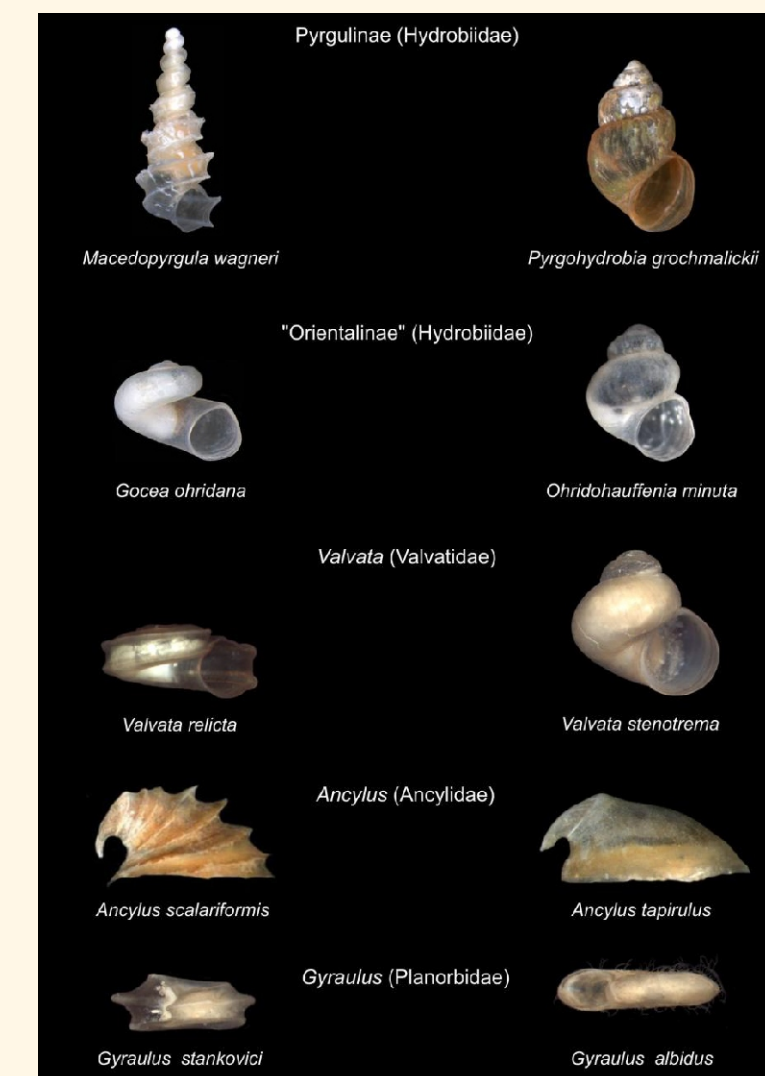
The **Region of Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes**, situated in south-western Europe (40°40'– 41°2N latitude; 20°23'– 21°16'E longitude), extends across the borders of Albania, Greece, and Macedonia. Lake Ohrid and Prespa Lakes belong to a group of Dasseretes basins that originated from a geotectonic depression 2 to 5 million years ago on the western Dinarides. Because of the karstic underground a large amount of water of Prespa Lakes seeps into the soil, drains away through a network of underground fissures, and supplies the springs located on the shore of Lake Ohrid. Lake Prespa is therefore considered to be a part of the Lake Ohrid Watershed. The total area of the Lake Ohrid Watershed amounts 3921 km² of which 1402 km² belong to the Lake Ohrid sub-watershed and 2519 km² to the Prespa Lakes sub-watershed.



Salmo letnica (Karaman, 1924)



Ochridaspongia rotunda (Arndt, 1937)



Endemic snails from Lake Ohrid (by T. Wilke)



Lake Ohrid (41°2'19"N, 20°44'13"E) is the oldest lake in Europe. The lake is situated in the Ohrid valley, in the south-western part of Macedonia, bordering Albania; at an altitude of 693.17 m a.s.l. Approximately two thirds of the lake surface area belong to Macedonia and the remaining third to Albania. It has a surface area of 358.2 km², a maximum depth of 288.7 m, a mean depth of 163.71 m, a water volume of 58.6 km³, and a shoreline length of 87.53 km. The drainage area is 1129 km², with 40 tributaries.

- unique aquatic ecosystem and a hotspot of freshwater biodiversity with more than 210 endemic species described: Bacillariophyta 14%, endoparasitic Infusoria 88%, Rhabdocoela 44%, Tricladida 71%, Hirudinea 54%, Gastropoda 90%, Amphipoda 90% and Ostracoda 66%.
- intralacustrine speciation, typical in old, deep and large preglacial lakes.
- a refuge for numerous freshwater organisms from the Tertiary Period, "museum of living fossils": Ohrid Trout (*Salmo letnica*) and a freshwater sponge (*Ochridaspongia rotunda*).
- a key site for biodiversity and speciation research.



Lake Prespa (40°54'N, 21°02'E) is a transboundary lake shared between Macedonia, Albania and Greece. The lake is located at 849 m above sea level has a surface area of 254 km², a catchment area of 1300 km², a maximum water depth of 48 m, a mean water depth of 14 m, and a volume of 3.6 km³. The total inflow is estimated to 16.9 m³s⁻¹, with 56% originating from river runoff from numerous small streams, 35% from direct precipitation, and 9% from Lake Mikri Prespa to the south. There is no surface outlet of Lake Prespa. Water loss derives through evaporation (52%), irrigation (2%) and outflow through karst aquifers (46%).

- high habitat diversity, with a flora of more than 1300 species.
- significant bird migration and breeding habitats,
- biodiversity: 23 freshwater fish species (80% of which are endemic); 11 amphibian species; 21 reptile species; more than 42 mammal species, among which are endangered brown bear, the wolf, the otter and the chamois; and over 260 species of bird.
- a shelter for over 90 species of migratory birds (Dalmatian Pelican, one of the largest flying birds in the world).



- “Galicica National Park” established in 1958
- declaration of Lake Ohrid as UNESCO world heritage since 1979 as Natural/ 1980 as Cultural
- Ezerani Nature Reserve established in 1996 as Ramsar site
- Lake Prespa designated as Ramsar site in 1999
- establishment of the Prespa National Park in 2000
- Lake Prespa – Monument of Nature (IUCN Category III) 2011
- Ohrid Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in 2014

