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AMPHIBIANS AND SQUAMATE REPTILES FROM THE LATE MIOCENE MORSKAYA 2 FAUNA (RUSSIA)

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The Morskaya 2 locality (Azov Sea Region, Russia; middle Turolian, MN 13) provides a unique and one of the most abundant late Miocene vertebrate faunas of European Russia. The vertebrate assemblage includes fishes, amphibian, reptiles, birds, and mammals that up to now have been described only partly. The material of amphibians and squamate reptiles from Morskaya 2 is relatively poor and includes about 60 bones, mostly represented by fragmentary snake vertebrae. Nevertheless, this material allows us to newly recognize the following taxa: *Bufo* sensu stricto (Bufonidae), *Pelophylax* sp. (Ranidae), *Pseudopus pannonicus* (Anguidae), *Lacerta* sp. (Lacertidae), cf. *Eryx* (Boidae), *Natrix* sp., and a small-size colubrine (Colubridae). The *Bufo* from Morskaya 2 is similar to *Bufo bufo*, but differs in larger size, more elongated vertebrae, shape and proportions of scapula, radioulna and ischium, and wider pars descendens ilii. *Bufo* from Morskaya 2 may represent a new species which is ancestral to the *Bufo bufo* species group. The anguine lizard is assigned to *Pseudopus pannonicus* based on its large size similar to that of recent *P. apodus*. cf. *Eryx* is the first record of an erycine snake in the Miocene of Russia. *Natrix* sp. is most similar to *Natrix rudabanyaensis* from the Miocene of Hungary and Romania, but is too fragmentary for a detailed identification. The new data provide a clear snapshot of a still nearly unknown late Miocene herpetofauna of Russia. The paleoecological implication of this assemblage are unclear.