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### First report of *Leptoconops noei* in Tuscany inland and new morphological findings

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The genus *Leptoconops* (Diptera: Ceratopogonidae) is a taxon of blood-feeder biting-midges, with unknown vectorial role. In Italy the distribution is limited to non-urbanized coastal marshes and river mouths, with five species described. We investigated the presence of *Leptoconops* species in the land-locked hilly of Siena district, where these biting-midges had never been reported. We collected over 300 specimens of *Leptoconops* in 13 sites in July during the three years 2022-2024. To identify the species using taxonomical keys, the samples have been pictured with a high-precision digital stereomicroscope and with a scanning electron microscopy. Furthermore, we sequenced mitochondrial gene COI. As comparison, we conducted the same analysis with specimens collected during previously sampling campaigns in Grosseto district, where *Leptoconops* genus is well established and studied. All Siena specimens have been identified as *Leptoconops noei* (CLASTRIER&COLUZZI 1973) at morphological level. Molecular data and phylogenetic analysis confirmed the morphological identification. At SEM observation, Siena *L. noei* lacks the bulb-shaped sensilla in the palpal pit. These supposed olfactory organs have been described in every Italian *Leptoconops* species so far. For the first time, we attested the presence of *L. noei* in a new Italian district, with different geographical features, and described new morphological characteristics.

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