



Rec. zool. Surv. India : 108(Part-1) : 41-42, 2008

REDISCOVERY OF *RHACOPHORUS NASO* ANNANDALE, 1912 (AMPHIBIA : ANURA : RHACOPHORIDAE) FROM MIZORAM, NORTH EAST INDIA

ROSAMMA MATHEW AND NIBEDITA SEN

*Eastern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India,
Risa Colony, Fruit Garden, Shillong*

INTRODUCTION

“Mr. Kemp’s collections of Batrachia from the Abor Country and the Frontiers of Assam comprises 57 specimens of frogs and toads and a considerable number of tadpoles. With those obtained on the expedition of 1911-1912 I have included two interesting specimens taken by Mr. Kemp on a previous visit to the Frontier of eastern Bhutan. In all at least 25 species are represented of which about one third are new to science, while several have only been recorded hitherto from Burma or from Assam south of Brahmaputra. The collection, therefore, affords the opportunity of making important additions to the fauna of the Himalayas, the animals of extreme eastern region of which have up to the present been almost unknown” wrote Annandale in 1912.

Annandale described eight new species, from this collection including *Rhacophorus naso*. This he found to be a ‘peculiar’ species easily distinguishable from other members of the genus that occurred in Assam and Burma by the presence of a dermal appendage at its snout.

He reported the type to be a ‘unique specimen’ bearing the registration number 16929 in the Indian Museum register of Reptilia and Batrachia. From his description of the specimen it is clear that the specimen he described is a female. *Rhacophorus naso* Annandale, 1912, was since not seen or collected. ‘Several surveys made in and around Arunachal Pradesh did not yield any more material’ (Chanda, 1994).

There were at least twelve such species of anurans in North-East India which were known only from the original description. Under a study on ‘Little known amphibian species of North-East India’, serious efforts were made to collect these ‘little known’ amphibians. In this connection two surveys were conducted in the state of Mizoram. During the first survey in 2005 a single male

specimen of *Rhacophorus naso* was spotted on a tree trunk by a stream side some seven meters above ground in the District Park, Lunglei district of Mizoram. It was then identified to the genus level. During a second survey of the area, additional materials were collected including a single female on 4th June, 2006. Study of this female specimen confirmed its identity as *Rhacophorus naso* as it agreed well with Annandale's description of the 'unique' type specimen. The dermal appendage which distinguishes this species from others is not prominent in the males.

Material examined : 1 ex., SVL 34 mm (male), Regd. No. VA/ERS/ZSI/769, District park, Zebawk, Lunglei district, Mizoram (Alt. 1128 m, N 22°50', E. 92°49'), 22.9.2005, Coll. R. Mathew and party; 13 adults (and 10 juveniles), SVL 30-43 mm (2 females and 11 males), Regd. No. VA/ERS/ZSI/728, District Park, Lunglei District, Mizoram, 4.6.2006, Coll. R. Mathew and party.

Habitat : Trees by the side of stream. The first specimen in 2005 was collected from the free trunk during day. Thorough search during day time on the second visit yielded one specimen from the hollow of a bamboo. Near about areas yielded juveniles. Towards dusk a female specimen was spotted camouflaged on a tree trunk about a meter above the ground. More males and a female were collected in the rainy night from the park, from children's swings, tree trunks and ground.

Diagnosis : Annandale's description of the female specimen is very accurate. The females are purplish brown whereas the males are lustrous green and brown (Plate I). Preserved specimens do not retain the original colour.

Remark : Presently *Rhacophorus naso* has been placed under the genus *Aquixalus* (Frost, 2006, online reference).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata for permission to undertake the study and for laboratory facilities. Field assistance by Dr. Dimos Khyntiam and Mr. Nirmal Sapkota are gratefully acknowledged.

REFERENCES

- Annandale, N. 1912. Zoological results of the Abor Expedition Part I Batrachia. *Rec. Indian Mus. Calcutta*, **8** : 7-36 (Plates ii-iv).
- Chanda, S.K. 1994. Anuran (Amphibia) Fauna of Northeast India. *Mem. Zool. Surv. India*, **18** : 1-143 (p. 122).
- Frost Darrel, R. 2006. Amphibian species of the world : an online reference; version 4 (17 August, 2006)-<http://research-amnh.org/herpetology/amphibian/index.php>. American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA.