

**A NEW SPECIES OF *POLYPEDATES* (ANURA: RHACOPHORIDAE)
FROM THE WESTERN GHATS, INDIA, ALLIED TO THE
SRI LANKAN *P. CRUCIGER* BLYTH, 1852**

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(with two text-figures)

ABSTRACT.- A new species of *Polypedates* is described from southern Tamil Nadu State, south-western India. The new species, *P. pseudocruciger* is closely related to *P. cruciger* Blyth, 1852, from the mid hills and low country of Sri Lanka, from which it can be differentiated in showing a obtuse cutaneous spur on heel (vs absent); skin of forehead free (vs co-ossified to the fronto-parietal and squamosal bones); toe I webbing between distal and distal, subarticular tubercles; and tympanum diameter over 80 (vs less than 65) per cent diameter of orbit. Because of the attempt in the literature to synonymise *Polypedates* under *Rhacophorus*, the new species has been compared with members of both these genera from south-western India and Sri Lanka.

KEY WORDS: Anura; Rhacophoridae; *Polypedates pseudocruciger*; new species; Western Ghats; India.

INTRODUCTION

The Western Ghats is a range of mountains that run for 1,600 km along the western coast of India, and is one of 18 hot spots of biological diversity on earth (Myers, 1988; 1990). Although the amphibian fauna of the region is generally known to be diverse in terms of both species richness and endemism (see for instance, Inger and Dutta, 1986; Inger et al., 1987; Dutta, 1997), there have been relatively few taxonomic revisions for amphibian groups or intensive local sampling from these hill ranges in the last 100 years. The fauna thus has remained relatively unknown, and includes a number of ranid and rhacophorid species that reportedly co-occur in Sri Lanka. We describe here the rhacophorid reported earlier by Daniels (1991; 1992a; 1992b; 1997) and Daniels and Ravichandran (1995) as *Polypedates cruciger* Blyth, 1852 as a new species, and compare it with congeners from both south-western India and Sri Lanka.

We assign the new species to the genus *Polypedates* Tschudi, 1838 sensu Liem (1970), see also Gorham (1974), for the weakly webbed fingers; presence of vomerine teeth; large digital disks; absence of tarsal and anal folds, dermal

fold along forearm; and dorsum dull coloured, with a dark hour-glass-shaped mark. Being aware of the proposed synonymy of *Polypedates* under *Rhacophorus* by Dubois ("1986" 1987), we have compared it with members of both *Polypedates* and *Rhacophorus* from southern India and Sri Lanka, while retaining it in the genus *Polypedates*, following most recent workers (e.g., Frost, 1985; Duellman, 1993). In Dubois's ("1986" 1987) scheme of classification, the new species is a member of the *Rhacophorus* (*Rhacophorus*) *leucomystax* group of species.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The type series were preserved in ethanol, and measured ca. seven years after preservation. Descriptions of measurements are given in Das (1995). These include: snout-vent length (SVL), tibia length (TBL), head length (HL), head width (HW), head depth (HD), eye diameter (ED), eye to nostril distance (E-N), eye to snout distance (E-S), horizontal tympanum diameter (HTYD), vertical tympanum diameter (VTYD), interorbital distance (IO), internarial distance (IN), upper eyelid width (UE), and FIID (width of disk of finger III). Sex and maturity were determined