



A new species of *Leptotalax* (Anura: Megophryidae) from the sacred groves of Mawphlang, Meghalaya, north-eastern India

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Abstract

A new species of megophryid frog of the genus *Leptotalax* is described from the sacred groves of Mawphlang, East Khasi Hills, north-eastern India. *L. khasiorum* new species, is compared with congeners from India and other parts of south-east Asia. The new species is diagnosable in showing the following combination of characters: SVL 24.5–27.3 (mean 25.63 ± 0.61 SE) mm in a sample of four adult males; 31.2–33.4 (mean 32.50 ± 0.67 SE) mm in a sample of three females; dorsum with fine scattered tubercles; eyelids with tubercles; tympanum and supratympanic fold distinct; macroglands, including preaxillary, pectorals and ventrolateral glands present; Finger I > II; toe tips not dilated, bearing dermal fringes; dorsum with dark blotches; flanks with large dark blotches; dark tympanic mask present; venter lacking dark blotches; labial bars present and limbs with dark cross-bars.

Key words: *Leptotalax khasiorum* sp. nov. Megophryidae, Khasi Hills, north-eastern India

Introduction

The genus *Leptotalax* Dubois, 1980 (Anura: Megophryidae) is widespread in subtropical and tropical parts of south-east Asia and east Asia, with a range from southern China and north-eastern India, through Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Peninsular Malaysia, to Borneo (Inger *et al.*, 1999; Iskandar & Colijn 2000; Frost 2009). At present, 24 species are considered valid (Frost 2009; Matsui *et al.* 2009; Rowley & Trung 2009; Table 1).

We conducted an amphibian diversity assessment in the month of March 2009, at Mawphlang, a sacred grove in the East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya state, north-eastern India (Fig. 1), and report here a hitherto undescribed species of *Leptotalax* (subgenus *Lalax*, for reasons detailed in the diagnosis), which we name in this paper. Lathrop (1997) noted that the genus, as presently constituted, lack identifiable apomorphies. Delorme *et al.* (2006) enumerated apomorphic characters to diagnose *Leptotalax* from *Leptobranchella*, and while recognizing two nominal subgenera within the former: a northern lineage, *Lalax*, argued to be diagnosed on apomorphies, and a southern lineage, *Leptotalax*, containing taxa showing plesiomorphic residue of *Leptotalax* (*sensu lato*), after the recognition of *Lalax* (see Frost 2009).

Material and methods

The four males and three females from the type series were collected from moist interstices of rocks along a partially dried-up stream bed during the day and early evening. They were photographed prior to euthanasia,