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**THE SYSTEMATIC STATUS OF
 NYCTIBATRACHUS SANCTIPALUSTRIS
 MODESTUS RAO, 1920 (ANURA:
 RANIDAE)**

Nyctibatrachus sancti-palustris and *Nyctibatrachus sancti-palustris modestus* (specific names hyphenated in both instances) were described on the same page of a paper by Rao (1920: 125). Though no further citation of the second taxon has been made in regional checklists (e.g., Dutta, 1992; Frost, 1985; Gorham, 1974; Inger and Dutta, 1986), the existence of the holotype (Zoological Survey of India; ZSI 19179 and probably the paratype, Zoological Survey of Pakistan; ZSP Am-T.2; fide Siddiqi, 1973; the latter not examined by us) make the subspecific name potentially available. Dubois ("1986" 1987: 68) considered *N. s. modestus* to be specifically distinct, a move followed by Duellman (1993).

The holotype of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus* is a well preserved specimen measuring 23.3 mm in SVL (snout-vent length) 23.3 mm. Rao (1920) differentiated this taxon from *N. sanctipalustris* (SVL of types, 21.6 and 37.1 mm) using the following characters: 1. throat length relatively narrower; 2. snout length relatively shorter; 3. nostril nearer tip of snout (implying that nostril is closer to orbit in *sanctipalustris*); 4. interorbital width greater than twice upper eyelid width (condition in *sanctipalustris* not mentioned); 5. lack (vs presumed presence) of a canthus rostralis; 6. an elongated (vs rounded) metatarsal tubercle; 7. tarso-metatarsal articulation reaches (vs presumably fails to reach) snout or beyond; 8. skin with longitudinal dermal folds (vs presumably without folds); and 9. colouration "Pinkish above, more or less blotched" (vs "Reddish brown above"). Of these, only character states 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 can be considered important for systematics.

We compared the holotype of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus* with the types of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris* (ZSI 19183 and 19184), and discuss the purported differences below:

Snout length: Snout length to SVL ratios were 0.18 in *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus*; 0.15 and 0.18 in *N. sanctipalustris*.

Position of nostril: In all material examined, the nostril was nearer to snout-tip than to orbit. The ratio of eye-nostril distance to eye-snout tip distance is 0.52 in the holotype of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus*, 0.43 and 0.61 in the types of *N. sanctipalustris*.

Canthus rostralis: Absent in both name bearing types.

Shape of metatarsal tubercle: Hind limbs of the syntype of ZSI 19183 are flexed, those of the other syntype, ZSI 19184 are folded. The tarso-metatarsal articulation being at the site of the metatarsal tubercle, the tubercle appears rounded (Fig. 17 in Rao's Plate) in the former (similar in shape to the holotype of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus*), elongated (Fig. 18) in the latter.

Skin of dorsum: Longitudinal dermal folds on the dorsum are not visible on the types of either taxa, although this may be an artifact of preservation.

In addition, although Rao (1920) claimed to have compared the new subspecies with specimens the same size (presumably of *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris*), his Fig. 13 appears to be that of the larger female holotype (ZSI 19184) of *N. sanctipalustris*. The ratio of throat length to head width which (Rao, 1920) used to diagnose the subspecies *modestus*, falls close to the range of the two types of *N. sanctipalustris* (0.50 vs 0.40 and 0.46).

We therefore synonymise *Nyctibatrachus sanctipalustris modestus* Rao, 1920 with *N. sanctipalustris* Rao, 1920.

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