

Natural History Notes

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LITORIA DENTATA (Bleating Treefrog): UNUSUAL CALL. *Litoria dentata* (Keferstein, 1868) (Anura: Hylidae: Pelodyadidae) is a small arboreal frog common and widespread on the coast and mountain ranges of central eastern Australia (Cogger, 2000) including in anthropogenic urban habitats. Calls by adults typically consist of a series of extended bleating notes. This note reports a case of apparent alarm calling by a subadult *L. dentata* in an urban habitat.

On 6 January 2013, 17:19 h (Australian Eastern Standard Time), in Werrington (a western suburb of metropolitan Sydney), New South Wales, Australia, at 33°45'35.2"S, 150°45'25.4"E (WGS84 grid), 29 m elevation, ambient temperature 29.0°C, 0/8 cloud cover, occasional medium gusts of easterly breeze, after the sun had descended behind the neighbouring house to the west in the late afternoon of a hot sunny day, whilst inspecting with the aid of a torch the axils of an exotic potted bromeliad positioned ~0.6 m above ground on an old eucalypt stump behind the covered area next to the author's residence as part of ongoing study and monitoring of herpetofauna at this locality, a subadult (SVL ~35 mm) *L. dentata* was observed on the inner side of one axil (internal diameter ~2 cm), ~4 cm above the surface of water trapped within it, which immediately dropped down into the water, whereupon repeated short yapping calls were heard from the axil; closer inspection revealed two subadult *L. dentata* of similar size jostling for position at the water surface, both aligned head up with the venter of one subject pressed against the dorsum of the other, one of which (the one underneath) was emitting the repeated calls which were continuous for ~2 minutes until 17:21 h when even closer inspection by the author prompted both subjects to duck below the water surface and

calling stopped; shortly after retreat of the observer alarm calling was resumed intermittently with frequency decreasing until 17:25 h when alarm calling finally ceased; subsequent close inspection at 17:35 h revealed the protagonists had separated, one subject on one side of the axil with about two-thirds of the body submerged, the other on the opposite side of the axil with the urostyle just above the water surface. These calls were markedly different from both territorial and reproductive advertisement calls of *L. dentata*; much shorter, more frequently emitted notes, with calling extended well beyond the durations of typical diurnal calls. *L. dentata* is commonly observed on the property, and axils of this bromeliad were regularly utilised as diurnal refugia over the warmer months of the 2012-2013 season by up to 7 subadult *L. dentata* and occasionally by 1 small adult *L. peronii* (author, unpublished data). It is possible temperature of the water may have been a factor in the apparent dispute over position within the axil, and for the alarm calling; water temperature within the axil was 29.7°C (recorded using a digital probe thermometer); another slightly larger (SVL ~40 mm) small adult male *L. dentata* was detected at 17:36 h on the inner side of a large plastic barrel located ~1 m north of the bromeliad positioned to catch rainwater runoff from the roof, ~15 cm above the water surface, and immediately dropped into the water, ambient temperature 28.1°C, water temperature within 10 mm of the surface 31.9°C. A further possibility is suggested by the relative positions of the protagonists within the axil, similar to that adopted by amplexant pairs, which is that the subject embraced by the other was emitting a 'release call' as reported for several overseas Anura in cases of misdirected amplexus by conspecific males, however such release calling has not yet been

reported in any *Litoria*. It was of interest that a subadult *L. dentata* of this size was capable of any vocalisation; sex of the two subjects in the axil was undetermined, however subadult male *L. dentata* of this size observed at this locality typically do not engage in either territorial or advertisement calling although may occasionally attend the periphery of reproductive choruses (author, unpublished data). This appears to be the first report of alarm calling and heterophony in *L. dentata*.

TRACHEMYS DORBIGNI (Brazilian slider turtle): PREY. The distribution of *Trachemys dorbigni* (Duméril & Bibron, 1835) is restricted to South America, occurring in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina (Fritz & Havas, 2007) where it occupies reservoirs, rivers, ponds, and wetlands (Quintela & Loebmann, 2009). This species is the most abundant freshwater turtle to the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Its distribution has been extended to other Brazilian states, probably due to the illegal trafficking of wild animals (Bujes & Verrastro, 2007; Quintela & Loebmann, 2009). The species has been described as an opportunistic omnivore by Hahn (2005).

During the necropsy of an adult female of *T. dorbigni*, whilst searching for helminths, a specimen of *Erythrolamprus poecilogyrus* (Wied-Neuwied, 1825) (Serpentes: Dipsadi-

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dae) (Fig. 1) was found in the small intestine. The chelonian was collected in February 2011, in a channel in the urban area in the municipality of Pelotas (31°46'16.9" and 52°18'45.9"), state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, under license (N°23196-1) of Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade (ICMBio). The snake was fixed at 5% formalin and preserved in 70°GL alcohol.

Most information about the diet of *T. dorbigni* come from studies and reports conducted *dorbigni*. *E. poecilogyrus* is found in Brazil, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. For example, Pereira (1998) found insects, weeds, seeds, algae, leaves, bone fragments, and scales in sample of feces from free-living *T. dorbigni*. Hahn (2005) based on the stomach contents of 75 turtles in southern Rio Grande do Sul State



Figure 1. *Erythrolamprus poecilogyrus* collected in the small intestine of *Trachemys dorbigni* in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.