

# The Asian giant toad *Phrynoidis asper*: a terrestrial bufonid observed in an arboreal habitat

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The Asian giant toad *Phrynoidis asper* is a terrestrial species usually found on river banks that prefers fast-flowing or cascading streams for breeding (Eprilurahman & Kusuma, 2011; Kusrini, 2013; Maghfiroh & Eprilurahman, 2019). It has a stocky body with short limbs, prominent webs on the hind feet, and very rough skin with rounded poison glands located behind the eye and above the ear (Haas et al., 2023). The species has previously only been reported from terrestrial habitats but here we report an observation of it in a tree.

On 13 October 2023 at 11:48 h, a juvenile *P. asper* (SVL 8 cm) was observed sitting on the branch of a weeping fig tree *Ficus benjamina* at a height of 2 m above a riverbank (Fig. 1). The observation was made at the junction of the Bedog and Konteng rivers, located in Kasihan District, Bantul Regency, Province of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia (-7.837148° S, 110.340091° E). The observation lasted for three minutes, following which we managed to photograph it at a distance of 50 cm, before it dived into the water below.

Traditionally arboreal anuran species (e.g. hylids and rhacophorids) have adhesive toe pads, which provide adhesion for climbing (Hanna & Barnes, 1991). However, *P. asper* is considered to be terrestrial and has no obvious morphological adaptations to climbing (Kusrini, 2013; Alhadi et al., 2021). The obvious advantages to terrestrial bufonids of selecting arboreal resting sites are that they may offer avoidance of predators or parasites, and better access to prey (Lindquist et al., 2007; Granda-Rodriguez et al., 2008; Petrovan et al., 2022). Recently reported similar examples of normally terrestrial bufonids climbing into trees/shrubs have been for *Rhinella margaritifera* and *Rhinella castaneotica* in Brazil (De Noronha et al., 2013) and *Bufo* in Britain (Petrovan et al., 2022). It would be of interest to make further behavioural observations on *P. asper* to establish whether the use of arboreal habitats is a common phenomenon.

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**Figure 1.** Juvenile *Phrynoidis asper* (inset) sitting on a branch of a weeping fig tree *Ficus benjamina* above a riverbank (arrow indicates position of toad on branch)

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