

YES, WE HAVE NO BANANA FROGS!

CHRISTOPHER MATTISON

138 Dalewood Road, Beauchief, Sheffield

Banks (1985) reported on the occasional arrival of *Hyla rubra* into Britain via crates of bananas. Several of these frogs have also been forwarded to me over the years from fruit importers, in Southampton and Sheffield, all originating in Surinam (Dutch Guiana). In fact, this species has a much wider range than suggested by Banks, having been recorded from Trinidad, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador as well as the Guianas and Brazil, although it is possible that more than one species is at present known under this name (Duellman, 1970). In the West Indies it is known only from St. Lucia — its presence here could be the result of an accidental introduction bearing in mind its obvious talents as a stowaway.

Although I have no first hand experience of this species on the mainland, in Trinidad it is common in lowland areas, where it breeds in road-side ditches and other fairly small bodies of water. Breeding activities (calling, amplexus) appeared to be stimulated by rain, and always after dark.

Recently I investigated yet another incidence of banana travel and was surprised to find that the animal involved was not *H. rubra* but a small *Eleutherodactylus*. This particular shipment of fruit apparently originated in the Windward Islands (Guadaloupe, Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada) where a total of five species belonging to this genus are known. These are *E. barlagnei*, *E. johnstonei*, *E. martinicensis*, *E. pinchoni* and *E. urichi*. Apart from eliminating the latter, I have so far been unable to positively identify the frog, but note that it seems to be strongly arboreal (well-developed toe-pads and preference for resting well above the substrate), and appears to be female.

The frog is at present being maintained alive in the hope that I can obtain a mate for it, perhaps from the same greengrocer.



REFERENCES

- Banks (1985). *Hyla rubra*: a case of illegal immigration. *BHS Bulletin*, 12: 43-44.
- Duellman (1970). *The hylid frogs of Middle America*. Monograph of the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas.
- Schwarz and Thomas (1975). A Check-list of West Indian Amphibians and Reptiles. *Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Special Publications No. 1*.