There is some scope for confusing green or boldly-marked Common lizards with Sand lizards; hence there is a practical reason for discussing such variation and how misidentification might be avoided. Despite the Sand lizard's larger size (in adults), stockier build, larger head, and narrower habitat preferences (normally only sand dunes and heaths are inhabited by both), misidentified Common lizards result in a number of reported Sand lizard sightings submitted to the Herpetological Conservation Trust every year. Tantalisingly, some of these reported sightings are from parts of the country with suitable 'Sand lizard habitat' and historical records of populations that could conceivably survive today. Such reports are not usually accompanied by photographs, and only follow-up survey visits can confirm or refute them. Some simple rules would therefore be useful if they could help prevent misidentification.

Green colouration in Common lizards is certainly not as vivid as that seen in male Sand lizards. Common lizards are green all over their back and sides, whereas (male) Sand lizards only have green flanks and their ocelli are still distinctly visible. As well as varying degrees of dorsal and lateral 'stripyness', Common lizards generally display irregular flecked and dashed markings, typically consisting of triplets of dark and pale dashes, but these rarely form the pale-centred ocelli that characterise Sand lizards. Sand lizard ocellations take the form of dark irregular blobs with pale centres that are normally enclosed. These form continuous dorsal and lateral strips separated by unmarked greyish dorso-lateral strips. Even juvenile Sand lizards have small but distinct ocelli, whereas Common lizard juveniles quickly develop the dashed and striped markings of adults.

The example in Figure 2 from Aberdyfi is the nearest I have ever seen a Common lizard's markings approach those of a Sand lizard, and it would have been very frustrating if the lizard had not cooperated long enough to observe it and photograph it. I have yet to see a Common lizard whose colouration alone was sufficient to prevent specific identification, but the variability in their markings certainly allows room for error in identification.

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CHRIS GLEED-OWEN

The Herpetological Conservation Trust, 655A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4A, UK.

***PTYCHADENA MASCARIENSIS* (Mascarene ridged frog): PREDATION ON AN ENDEMIC MALAGASY CHAMELEON.** *Ptychadena mascariensis* is a medium-sized frog [male SVL 40 mm, female SVL up to 50 mm (Glaw & Vences, 1994)] which can be readily identified by its sharply pointed snout, the presence of six to eight longitudinal rows of granular tubercles running along the dorsum, and its 'typical ranid-like appearance' (Henkel & Schmidt, 2000).

This frog is extremely abundant in Madagascar with a wide distribution ranging from the humid forest of Montagne d' Ambre in the North to the arid spiny forest of Tsiombe in the South (Blommers-Schlosser & Blanc, 1991). However, it is one of only two species (together with *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus)* which are not endemic to Madagascar (Glaw & Vences, 1994) with populations found on the African mainland, the Seychelles and Mascarene islands (Goodman and Benstead, 2003). In contrast to Mascarene and Seychellean populations, molecular evidence suggests that Malagasy populations were not introduced from the African mainland by man and colonized the island naturally (Vences *et al.,* 2004).

Previous studies have focused on the feeding ecology of *P. mascariensis* and have found that this species is typically known to feed on invertebrates

such as snails, grasshoppers and beetles (Goodman & Benstead, 2003). However, it has been known to take conspecifics and other frogs (McIntyre & Ramanamanjato, 1999). In an attempt to provide more information regarding its feeding ecology, we provide natural history observations detailing the predation of a juvenile endemic Malagasy species of chameleon by this non-endemic frog.

Frontier-Madagascar is a collaboration between the Society for Environmental Exploration and the Insitute of Marine Sciences, University of Toliara, Madagascar. The Frontier-Madagascar Forest Research Programme carries out scientific and socio-economic survey work with a view to informing conservation decisions. In January 2005 field staff were conducting a biodiversity survey in the Sept Lacs region (S 23° 28' – S 23° 31', E 44° 04' – E 44° 10') which is a core area of gallery forest found in the Parc Regional de Belomotse, South West Madagascar.

On the 20th of January field staff encountered a relatively large female frog (SVL 48 mm) during a casual collection along the banks of a relatively fast flowing stream. Upon collection this individual promptly regurgitated a juvenile *Furcifer lateralis* (SVL 33 mm). *Furcifer lateralis* is a medium sized chameleon species (adults reaching 200–250 mm in total length) and is characterised by the presence of a white medioventral line and three dark circles on the flanks (Glaw & Vences, 1994). The unfortunate individual must have been ingested moments before regurgitation as it was still breathing (although weakly).

Although this particular predation event itself is not too concerning [*F. lateralis* is a common species found all over Madagascar with an affinity towards degraded habitat (Glaw & Vences, 1994)] it is unlikely that *P. mascariensis* discriminates between the species upon which it predates. If offered the opportunity it may also feed upon the juveniles of threatened species such as *Furcifer labordi*, *Furcifer minor*, *Furcifer campani* and the dwarf chameleon *Brookesia perarmata* which are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List (2005).

Although previous studies have brought attention to its relatively broad diet, this study is the first to describe *P. mascariensis* feeding upon a species of reptile. Therefore no research has been conducted in order to determine the impact that this species of ranid has or will continue to have on the highly endemic Malagasy herpetofauna [estimated at 96% (Goodman & Benstead, 2003)]. We conclude that in order to achieve this, further research investigating its feeding ecology and behaviour is required.

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NEIL C. D'CRUZE and JEREMY A. SABEL
Frontier: The Society for Environmental Exploration, 50–52 Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3QP, UK.
Email*: info@frontier.ac.uk*