

Scientific note

Diurnal activity of an adult *Ceratophrys cornuta* preying on *Copeoglossum nigropunctatum*

(Anura, Ceratophryidae and Squamata, Scincidae)

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Fig. 1. Adult *Ceratophrys cornuta* camouflaged in the dry leaf litter (upper left), with a captured adult skink, *Copeoglossum nigropunctatum*, on 8 November 2023 (11:00 am) at Panguana, Huánuco, Peru.

Adults of the frog *Ceratophrys cornuta* (Linnaeus, 1758), a species distributed throughout the Amazon basin and the Guianas, are known to be opportunistic sit-and-wait predators able to ingest large prey, including vertebrates (summarized by Schalk et al. 2014). In an ecological field study, Duellman & Lizana (1994) found adult *C. cornuta* to be nocturnal, with activity strongly correlated to rainfall, whereas in drier periods these frogs were rarely found and suggested to be buried deeper in the ground.

On 8 November 2023, at 11:00 am, in the ACP Panguana (9°37'S, 74°56'W, 260 m a. s. l.), a protected area of lowland rainforest in Amazonian Peru (Niessner et al. 2020), the following observations were made: At the forest edge, close to a trail, an adult *C. cornuta* (snout-vent length ca. 7–8 cm) was discovered camouflaged in the dry leaf litter, having captured a lizard that was still

moving its tail (Fig. 1). Based on its keeled scales, body size and colour pattern, this lizard was identified as an adult of the scincid *Copeoglossum nigropunctatum* (Spix, 1825). The scenario was observed for ca. 2–3 min. during which there was little movement of the frog, suggesting that it simply waited for the death of the heavily injured skink prior to ingestion (not observed). Conditions during the observation were sunny and dry, at 33°C air temperature. Noteworthy amounts of precipitation prior to this observation date to the 4 November 2023 with 35 mm of rainfall, whereas the days in between were without rain.

Our observation documents for the first time diurnal activity and preying of adult *C. cornuta*. This is remarkable, as conditions during the observation were rather dry and the activity was not correlated to preceding rainfall events, as usually documented (e. g., Duellman & Lizana 1994). In this respective season, Amazonia suffered from an extreme drought, with 46 consecutive days in August/September and 22 days in October 2023 without significant rainfall (<10 mm) at Panguana (own data), and possibly *Ceratophrys* were 'forced' to become active to consume prey despite unfavourable conditions to avoid starvation. Moreover, with *C. nigropunctatum*, a rather agile scincid lizard, we add a further prey species to the diet of Ceratophryidae.

References

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