

Scientific note

A distinctive colour morph and the first record of the microhylid frog *Scaphiophryne matsoko* from Marojejy National Park, northeastern Madagascar

(Amphibia: Anura)

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Fig. 1. *Scaphiophryne matsoko* from Marojejy National Park.

Scaphiophryne matsoko Raselimanana et al., 2014 is a poorly known microhylid species from the rainforests of north-eastern Madagascar. It is currently known from only a few localities, including Marotondrano Special Reserve, Ambatovaky Special Reserve, the Masoala Peninsula (Ankarana River near Antalaha), Tsararano and Besariaka, at elevations of approximately 70–940 m a.s.l. (Raselimanana et al. 2014). Since then, two additional individuals have been documented photographically: one by Oliver Hawlitschek and Kathleen Webster in Makira Natural Park (<https://www.zoo.ch/de/zoonews/bedeutenderfund-im-makira-naturpark>) and another by Ivan Leshukov in the Andapa region (with imprecise coordinates -14.69405, 49.57633; accuracy 30.94 km; see <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/148107332>).

On 25 March 2025 at 11:38 a.m., SJ, MW and TL photographed an individual in Marojejy National Park while crossing the trail slightly above Camp Mantella, at approximately 450 m a.s.l. This observation represents the first documented record of *S. matsoko* from Marojejy and extends the known distribution of the species towards the northeast. The colouration of the Marojejy individual (Fig. 1) differs markedly from that described in the original species description and from the subsequently available photographs. The hindlimbs are almost entirely bright green, versus brown with a few green spots or displaying

a marbled brown-green pattern. In addition, the dorsum is largely uniform black with a few green spots, and the flanks are black, whereas the previously documented pattern is characterised by a brown dorsum with darker brown markings and a few black and green spots, together with brown flanks.

The individual photographed in Makira appears to be a juvenile, whereas the iNaturalist individual appears to be an injured adult with a predominantly brown colour pattern. Given the strikingly different colouration of the Marojejy individual, an assessment of its taxonomic status would be worthwhile. Several experienced guides working in Marojejy National Park reported that they had never encountered this species previously (pers. comm. to FG). This may indicate that *S. matsoko* is locally rare, seasonal, or difficult to detect.

The distribution map provided in the IUCN assessment (IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group 2020) does not appear to fully reflect the currently documented localities of *S. matsoko*. In particular, it does not depict the occurrence on the Masoala Peninsula, which is based on paratype UMMZ (University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology) 211519; coordinates -15.308333, 50.233333 according to the UMMZ database (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amph3ic?page=index>). We therefore recommend re-evaluating the distribution of *S. matsoko*.

References

- IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group. 2020. *Scaphiophryne matsoko* (amended version of 2016 assessment). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2020: e.T78585464A177143897. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T78585464A177143897.en> [accessed 07 September 2026].
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