

The Greenhouse Frog (*Eleutherodactylus planirostris*) in the diet of the Brown Shrike in the Philippines

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Photographs by: Maria Katrina C. Constantino.

Subjects identified by: Emerson Y. Sy, Maria Katrina C. Constantino.

Location: Quezon City, National Capital Region, Luzon Island, Philippines.

Elevation: 48 metres.

Habitat: Residential garden within a highly-populated urban city.

Date and time: 21 January 2017, 07:38 hrs

Identity of subjects:

- i) Greenhouse Frog, *Eleutherodactylus planirostris* (Amphibia: Anura: Eleutherodactylidae).
- ii) Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus* (Aves: Passeriformes: Laniidae).

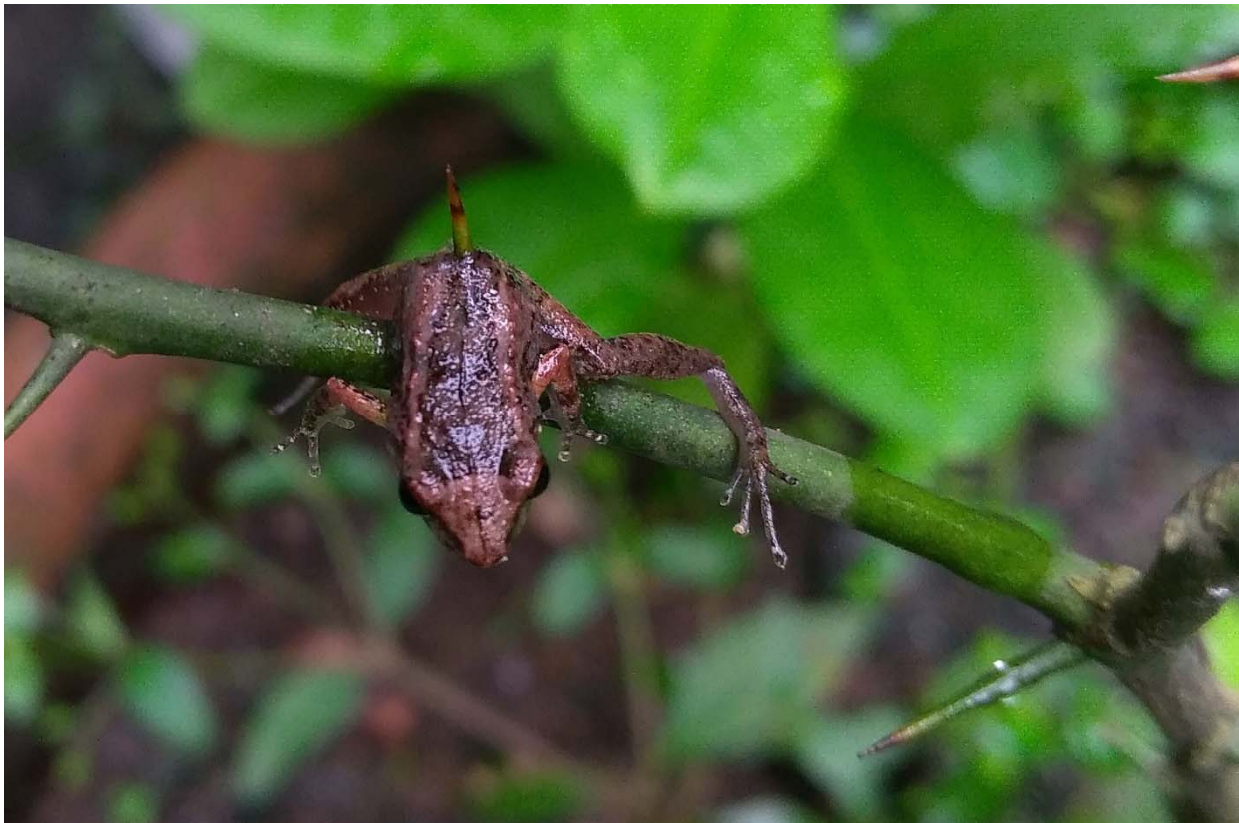


Fig. 1.

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Description of record: A Brown Shrike was observed surveying actively for potential prey from a perch 1.5 meters from the ground in the early morning after sunrise. It swooped down to the ground, which was covered by garden leaf litter, and caught its prey. It then flew to a potted citrus plant, impaled the prey on a long thorn and flew off again, to perch in the canopy of a nearby tree.

Around half an hour after photographing the impaled small frog (Fig. 1), the bird came back for its prey and started tearing the flesh into smaller pieces with its beak, starting with the limbs, whilst using the thorn to anchor the frog for leverage. The smaller pieces were swallowed whole. After consuming a small amount, the shrike flew off again, leaving the remains of the frog still impaled (Fig. 2). When the plant was checked three hours later, the entire frog had been consumed.



Fig. 2.

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Remarks: The frog was identified as *Eleutherodactylus planirostris* based on (i) its small size (ca. 20mm snout-vent length), (ii) two light brown-coloured dorsolateral stripes, (iii) head as broad as body and (iv) toes which are slender and long without webbing (Olson et al., 2012). It is an introduced species in the Philippines and is currently known to occur on the following islands: Cebu, Luzon, Mactan, Mindanao, Negros and Palawan (Ducao et al., 2017; Sy, 2017a, Sy 2017b).

The Brown Shrike is a small bird found throughout the Philippines. It is a common and abundant migrant occupying all types of habitats. Although most individuals arrive during August or September and depart by May, it has been reported throughout the year (Kennedy et al., 2000). It is very aggressive and territorial, often observed chasing off other birds. It has a loud, sharp rattling call but also a pleasant melodious song. It perches conspicuously while it hunts for its prey which typically includes insects and small vertebrates. The bird is known to impale its prey on a sharp branch, thorn or even man-made structures such as barbed wire. The prey is then eaten immediately or is left impaled on the plant to be eaten throughout the duration of the day.

Invertebrates, frogs, lizards, snakes, birds, and mammals are known to predate on the Greenhouse Frog, both in its natural and in its introduced range. This note provides the first known predator of the introduced Greenhouse Frog in the Philippines.

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