

Interspecific amplexus of *Rhinella marina* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Polypedates leucomystax* (Gravenhorst, 1829) on Mindoro Island, Philippines

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Observer: Michaela S. Webb.
Photograph by: Michaela S. Webb.
Subjects identified by: Przemysław Zdunek.

Location: Munting Buhangin, Barangay Udalo, Municipality of Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines.
(13.4775°N, 120.816944°E; WGS 84)
Elevation: 26 metres ASL.
Habitat: Sparsely populated residential area near the coast; private house with garden.
Date and time: 12 July 2014, 22:52 hrs.

Identity of subjects:

- i) Cane Toad, *Rhinella marina* (Amphibia: Anura: Bufonidae).
- ii) Common Southeast Asian Tree Frog / Four-lined Tree Frog, *Polypedates leucomystax* (Amphibia: Anura: Rhacophoridae).

Description of record:

An interspecific amplexus was observed between a male *Polypedates leucomystax* and a female *Rhinella marina* (Fig.1). The individuals were sitting on a floor mat inside the door frame and remained motionless for several minutes before hopping down three steps and disappearing into the garden.



Figure 1. *Polypedates leucomystax* (above) and *Rhinella marina* (below).

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Remarks:

The female Cane Toad (which are much bigger than males) was identified based on (i) large, triangular, swollen parotid glands, (ii) cranial ridges are well-developed, and (iii) skin with irregularly scattered warts (Somaweera et al., 2018). *Rhinella marina* is an introduced species in the Philippines (Diesmos et al. 2006).

The Common Southeast Asian Tree Frog (*Polypedates leucomystax*) (assumed to be male) was identified based on (i) slightly built, (ii) snout pointed, (iii) lacks raised warts/tubercles on back, (iv) fingers and toes with circular discs, (v) toes fully webbed except on toe 4, (vi) lateral face darker than dorsal and (vii) a prominent dark stripe extends from the snout, through the eye, above the tympanum and past the neck (Somaweera, 2020).

Whilst the Cane Toad is frequently observed within Barangay Udalo and throughout the seasons, the Common Southeast Asian Tree Frog is less abundant but are more likely to be encountered during the wet season. We have observed that the local population of the latter has noticeably increased in past years due to the installation of birdbaths at a height of 1 meter above the ground. Both eggs and tadpoles have been observed in these containers.

This type of interspecies event is not uncommon in many countries (Serrano et al., 2022) even in the Philippines (Lorenzo & Ralubit, 2019; Flores et al., 2022). The exact causes and mechanisms of misdirected amplexus are still unclear, it is possible that the high abundance of heterospecific males and the low abundance of same-species males may have an impact (Hettyey and Pearman, 2003). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first observation of interspecific amplexus between a native and an introduced species on Mindoro Island.

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