

NINETEENTH CENTURY COLLECTIONS OF AUSTRALIAN FROGS IN THE ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

M. J. Tyler,¹ I. Danilov,² and J. Calaby³

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An examination of nineteenth century specimens of frog fauna collected in Australia and housed in the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg provides valuable insight into nomenclature of the period and highlights the extent of herpetological collections. This paper presents historical notes on collections by Godeffroy, Niehoff, Paessler, Preiss, Salmin, and Temminck.

Key words: Frog, Russian, Nineteenth Century, Herpetology, Zoological.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of the frog fauna of Australia took a major step forward upon the publication by Boulenger (1882) of his monumental work, the second edition of the “Catalogue of the Batrachia Salientia s. Ecaudata in the Collection of the British Museum.” Among the numerous specimens cited was material obtained from the Godeffroy Museum at Hamburg. A portion of this source was purchased by Alexander Strauch, Director of the Zoological Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, now the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg (Strauch, 1889). A visit to that institution in 1994 by one of us (Tyler) provided an opportunity to examine the Godeffroy and other specimens collected in Australia in the nineteenth century. This material and its documentation is highly significant because it provides an insight into the nomenclature in vogue at that period, and highlights the extent of herpetological collections. Here we present historical notes, revised identifications and the names under which they appear in the Zoological Institute catalogue.

Godeffroy (Johann Caesar IV Godeffroy)

Mr. Godeffroy was the Principal of a large world company involved in trading and shipping: J. C. Go-

deffroy & Sohn. He had been interested in natural history from an early age and instructed the captains of his ships to obtain biological and ethnographic specimens. He established the Museum Godeffroy in his home base of Hamburg. There the best specimens were deposited and the remainder (“duplicates”) were sold to other institutions and private collectors.

Godeffroy also employed collectors who under contract were sent to specific areas. His chief collector in Australia was Amalie Dietrich who collected extensively from 1863 to the end of 1872. The Taipan *Oxyuranus scutellatus* and the False Water Rat *Xeromys myoides* are examples of her endeavors, whilst *Anomalops godeffroyi* Peters and *Gonocephalus godeffroyi* Peters carry his name.

It is not clear whether all of the specimens housed in the Russian Academy of Science were purchased as “duplicates,” or from the Godeffroy Museum collection following its demise upon the bankruptcy of J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn in 1879.

The material attributed to Godeffroy is the largest component of the Australian fauna included in the St. Petersburg collection. The following species are included:

Adelotus brevis (*Cryptotis brevis*). Reg. No. 878. A sub-adult specimen (s-v 30.4 mm). Port Bowen, Qld, 1874.

Crinia signifera (*Crinia georgiana*). Reg. No. 875. Sydney, NSW, 1874.

Cyclorana novaehollandiae (*Phractops alutaceus*). Reg. No. 835-6. Rockhampton, Qld, 1868.

Boulenger (1882) lists specimens from Rockhampton as *Chiroleptis australis*, at that time consid-

¹ Department of Zoology, University of Adelaide, South Australia 5005, Australia.

² Department of Herpetology, Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Science, St. Petersburg, Russia.

³ CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.

ered to be a synonym and an issue not resolved for a century (Tyler and Martin, 1975).

Limnodynastes convexiusculus (*Limnodynastes salmini*). Reg. No. 843. New Holland, 1868. An unsexed adult with an s-v of 63.8 mm.

Limnodynastes ornatus (*Limnodynastes marmoratus*). Reg. No. 774. Brisbane, 1867; Reg. No. 846. (*L. ornatus*).

Limnodynastes peroni (*L. peroni*). Reg. No. 845. New Holland, 1868. Sub-adult 29.8 mm s-v.

Limnodynastes tasmaniensis (*L. tasmaniensis*: 3 specimens), Reg. No. 844. New Holland: sub-adult, 1868; Reg. No. 877 (*L. krefftii*) Port Bowen, 1874.

Litoria alboguttata (*Chiroleptes australis*). Reg. No. 838. Rockhampton, Qld, 1868 (2 specimens).

Litoria aurea (*H. aurea*). Reg. No. 1069. Sydney, 1874.

Litoria caerulea (*Pelodyras caeruleus*). Reg. No. 837. Rockhampton, Qld, 1868.

Litoria dentata (*Hyla rubella*). Reg. No. 874. Sydney, NSW, 1874.

Litoria inermis (*Chiroleptes inermis*). Reg. No. 839. Rockhampton, Qld, 1868. The data are identical to those of the type series (Peters, 1867). Straughan (1969) recognized a number of syntypes but Cogger et al. (1983) recognized a holotype. The status of this particular specimen remains uncertain because there is no evidence that the author (H. W. Peters) had access to it at the time of his original description.

Litoria latopalmata (*Chiroleptes alboguttatus*). Reg. No. 1074. Qld, 1874. The condition of this specimen is very poor.

Litoria lesuerii (*Litoria wilcoxi*). Reg. No. 848. New Holland, 1868; Reg. No. 876. Port Bowen, Qld, 1874.

Litoria nasuta (*Litoria nasuta*). Reg. No. 879. Rockhampton, Qld, 1874; Reg. No. 1070, Qld, 1878.

Litoria peroni (*Hyla peroni*). Reg. No. 850. New Holland, 1868.

Litoria revellata (*Hyla citropus*). Reg. No. 1076. Qld, 1878; (*Hyla adelaidensis*), Qld, 1878.

Litoria rothii (*Hyla peronii*). Reg. No. 883. Port Mackay, Qld, 1874.

Litoria rubella (*Hyla ewingii*). Reg. No. 851, New Holland, 1868; Reg. No. 872 (*Hyla ewingii*) Qld, 1847; (*Hyla rubella*) Reg. No. 1075, Qld, 1878.

Pseudophryne australis (*P. australis*). Reg. No. 1068 (2). Sydney, 1878.

Pseudophryne bibronii (*P. bibronii*) Reg. No. 849. New Holland, 1868; Reg. No. 1067 (*Cystignathus georgianus*). Sydney, 1878; Reg. No. 1068 (*Pseudophryne aus-*

tralis). Sydney, 1878; Reg. No. 1072. Qld, 1878; Reg. No. 1668. *Pseudophryne coriacea*, Rockhampton, Qld, 1874.

Uperoleia spp. (*Hyperoleia marmorata*). Reg. No. 87. Qld, 1874; Reg. No. 1073 (*H. marmorata*). Qld, 1878.

Niehoff

Mr. Niehoff was a hotelier in Melbourne. Three specimens are attributed to him — all collected in 1862. Two are identifiable:

Limnodynastes sp. (*L. tasmaniensis*). A transforming tadpole in too poor condition to permit specific identification with any certainty.

Limnodynastes dumerillii (*L. dorsalis*). The collection was obtained by Niehoff in South Australia.

Paessler

No details of this collector have been located. A single specimen is attributed to him:

Litoria latopalmata (*L. lesueuri*). Reg. No. 773. NSW, 1863.

Johann August Ludwig Preiss

Preiss arrived at the Swan River settlement in W. A. in 1838 and remained there until 1842 (Calaby, 1967). Five specimens in the Zoological Institute are attributed to him:

Litoria adelaidensis (*Hyla adelaidensis*). Reg. No. 565 (4 specimens). New Holland, 1842. Adult males 42.2 — 6.3 mm. All in atrocious condition but identifiable by the broad, dark lateral stripe surmounted by a narrow white stripe.

Litoria moorei (*L. raniformis*). Reg. No. 563. New Holland, 1842.

Salmin

The contributions of Salmin were sufficiently significant for Steindachner (1867) to name *Limnodynastes salmini* in his honor. Most of the specimens collected by him are poorly preserved; only the following are identifiable:

Cyclorana novaehollandiae (*Phractops alutaceus*). Reg. No. 797. Rockhampton, Qld, 1873.

Limnodynastes dumerillii (*L. marmoratus*). Reg. No. 803. Rockhampton, Qld, 1873.

Litoria phyllochroa (*Hyla phyllochroa*). Reg. No. 809. Rockhampton, Qld. *Pseudophryne australis* (*P. australis*); Reg. No. 782. New Holland, 1870.

Temminck

Litoria infrafronata (*Pelodryas dolichopsis*). Reg. No. 344. King George Sound (?), 1833. The locality is clearly in error because it is in the extreme south-west of the continent, whereas this species is confined to the north-east.

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