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

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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. Godeffroy & 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 subadult specimen (s-v 30.4 mm). Port Bowen, Qld, 1874.

Boulenger (1882) lists specimens from Rockhampton as Chiroleptis australis, at that time consid-
ered to be a synonym and an issue not resolved for a
century (Tyler and Martin, 1975).


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


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


*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 nasuta* (*Litoria nasuta*). Reg. No. 879. Rockhampton, Qld, 1874; Reg. No. 1070, 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 bibronii* (*P. bibronii*) Reg. No. 849. New Holland, 1868; Reg. No. 1067 (*Cystignathus georgianus*). Sydney, 1878; Reg. No. 1068 (*Pseudophryne aus-

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**Temminck**

*Litoria infrafrenata* (*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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**REFERENCES**


