

An Asian Common Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Schneider, 1799) (Anura: bufonidae) Feeding on the Scorpion *Janalychas sp* in India

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Abstract

The first record of an Asian common Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Schneider, 1799) (Anura: bufonidae) praying on the scorpion *Janalychas sp*, from a 'Padmashree Dr. D.Y.Patil Technical campus' Talsande, Tal.-Hatkanangale, Dist.- Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India. This is first record of an Asian Toad.

Key words

Duttaphrynus melanostictus, toad food, feeding behavior of Asian Toad, Toad, amphibian.

Introduction

Asian common toad, *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* (Schneider, 1799) widely distributed in Southeastern Iran, Northwestern Saudi Arabia, west Yemen, Northeastern Oman and adjacent United Arab Emirates east to northern Pakistan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, and China (Frost 2020. Amphibian Species of the World: An Online Reference. Version 6.0. <https://amphibiansoftheworld.amnh.org>: 12 April 2020). The species grows up to about 20cm (8 in) in length and its breeding period is monsoon, the young ones are seen in large number after the monsoon. *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* is important in ecosystem, agriculture, medicine and scientific studies. However, the number of individuals in population are decreasing in recent years due to habitat loss (nguyen et al. 2005). The female *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* was monitored preying on a neurotoxic, venomous elapid, *sinomicrurus maccllellandi* (H.T.Lalremsanga et al. 2021). However, there is no record of *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* feeding on the scorpion *Janalychas sp*. Here, we provide our observations and the photographic evidences on the *Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, (Schneider, 1799) (Anura: bufonidae) praying on the scorpion *Janalychas sp*, now recorded from 'Padmashree Dr. D.Y.Patil Technical campus' Talsande, Tal-Hatkanangale, Dist.-Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India (16°52'35.1''N 74°15'38.4''E).

Observations

Many Toads of *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* (Schneider, 1799) have been found in the area of the 'Padmashree Dr. D.Y.Patil Technical campus' Talsande, Tal-Hatkanangale, Dist. - Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India. The Toads are common in around the cattle shed, an exposed piping, under the rocks, under the leaf litter and weeds at the base of trees, near the ponds, etc. They are mostly nocturnal feeding, where they tend to visit the cattle shed at night for feeding on insects which are attracted to the lights in cattle shed. We began monitoring the feeding behavior of toad, and set a video camera to monitor the toad's activity. In July 2022, at night we observed a *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* (Schneider,

1799) (9 cm) and a scorpion *Janalychas sp* near artificial water pond in cattle shed, sharing same habitat. The toad approached and ambushed the scorpion *Janalychas sp*, bit on the pedipalps and mouth region of the scorpion, and trying to ingest it, frequently chewing and vigorously grabbing the scorpion with help of its forelimb while pushing into the mouth (fig.1). The scorpion, half part of its body ingested by the *Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, tried to get free by biting by telson and resisting with the legs (fig.1). After sometime, scorpion *Janalychas sp* stopped the resisting and the *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* immediately ingested the unconscious scorpion *Janalychas sp*. The total time from attack to complete ingestion was 16 seconds. Timing of this event was coincidental. It is observed that, this is the first report of an Asian Common Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Schneider, 1799) feeding on scorpion *Janalychas sp* in India.



Fig. 1. An Asian Common Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Schneider, 1799) feeding on the scorpion *Janalychas sp*. Photograph by Ashutosh Suryawanshi, Pratik Rayat

Conservation status

IUCN Red List- Least concern. “[4]”

Threats

Adaptable to various environments, there are no major threats. It is found in international pet trade “[3]”

Conclusion

This is first report of an Asian Common Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Schneider, 1799) feeding on scorpion *Janalychas sp* in India.

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