

NYCTIBATRACHUS MAJOR (Large Wrinkled Frog) **FOOD HABITS.** *Nyctibatrachus major* (Boulenger) (Anura: Ranidae), is an aquatic-stream dwelling ranid endemic to Southern Western Ghats of India. Although scientific information on occurrence, habitat feature, larval morphology and femoral glands are available (Pillai 1978, Bull Zool, surv. India. 1:135 - 140; Krishnamurthy et al, 1992. J.Indian Inst. Sci., 72:385-393; Daniels 1997, Cobra, 28:1-14, Krishnamurthy 1997, Froglog no. 20:2), there is no information on food of this species. This is the first note on the feeding habit especially predation of *N. major* on other ranid species of the same habitat.

During the general survey on amphibians in Kudremukh National Park of Western Ghats, on 22nd May 1998, during the evening hours, accidentally the predation of *N. major* on an aquatic frog was noticed. This stimulated to examine the food of this species. Subsequently 48 adult and 8 subadult of *N. major* (SVL: Mean 34.18 mm, SD 16.249 mm, range 13-54 mm; Body weight; mean 7.86 grams, SD 6.124 grams, range 2 - 26.70 grams) from 14 different localities were examined for their stomach contents. The food content analysis of adult frog in a total of 31 cases, revealed the presence of half digested, subadults of other anuran members, viz, *Limnonectus limnocharis*, *Rana cyanophlyctis*, and adults of *Micrixalus saxicola*. Among the remaining adult and all subadults the predominating food components includes, the insect larva of members of *Ophiogampus* sp, *Psephenus* sp. *Enochrus* sp. *Neides* sp. *Sminthurinus* sp. and members of the family Dytiscidae and Haliplidae. In addition, in some cases the organic debris was also noticed and in few cases (2 sub adults and 6 adults) the stomach were empty.

Analysis of amphibian diversity in all 14 localities reveals the occurrence of *N. major* with *Limnonectus limnocharis*, *Micrixalus saxicola*, *Rana brevipalmata*, *R. temporalis*, *R. semipalmata*, *R. cyanophlyctis*, *Tomopterna rufescence*, *Microhyla rubra*, *M. ornata*, *Philautus* sp. and *Nyctibatrachus pygmaeus* in the same habitat. Among these, the prominent co-occurrence with *N. major* are *R. cyanophlyctis*, *R. temporalis*, *L. limnocharis* and *M. saxicola* at a rate of 50,40,30 and 20% respectively of the total observations. Among these predominantly co-occurring species, the *L. limnocharis*, *R. cyanophlyctis* and *Micrixalus saxicola* were confined to the microhabitat of *N. major*, while the *R. temporalis* is confined to littermats of the peripheral zone of *N. major*'s microhabitat. Hence, the high degree of predation of *N. major* (supported by the fact that, the gut content of *L. limnocharis*, *R. cyanophlyctis* collected from the same habitat did not have *N. major* as their food) on *R. cyanophlyctis*, *L. limnocharis*, could be related to the co-occurrence of latter two species and selective feeding of *N. major*.

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