

Herpetological collaboration in Vietnam

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Abstract. This report gives a short overview about herpetological investigations in Vietnam. A list of new amphibian and reptile species described from Vietnam between 1980-2006 is provided.

Introduction

Vietnam has become well known for its remarkable and unique biodiversity, particularly its amphibian and reptile fauna. Numerous surveys of herpetofauna have been carried out in different areas of the country in the last decades. In the early 20th century (1924-1944), Bourret counted 177 species and sub-species of lizards, 245 species and sub-species of snakes, 45 species and sub-species of turtles, and 171 species and sub-species of amphibians for the Indochinese region [Bourret, 1936, 1941a, 1941b, 1942a, 1942b, 1943]. During the period between 1945 and 1954 no remarkable herpetological studies were undertaken, due to the influence of war. From 1954 to 1975, results of several surveys conducted by Vietnamese herpetologists in the north of the country included a total of 68 amphibian and 159 reptile species [Tran et al., 1981]. From the south, Campden-Main (1970) reported on 77 species of snakes in his field guide. From 1976 to 1980, under the collaboration between Vietnamese and Russian institutions, several herpetological surveys were carried out in the north and the centre of Vietnam. The first list and the key to all species of reptiles and amphibians of Vietnam was compiled by Dao Van Tien, including 87 species of amphibians, 77 species of lizards, 165 species of snakes, 32 species of turtles, and two species of crocodiles [Dao, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982]. The second checklist was published by Nguyen Van Sang and Ho Thu Cuc (1996) that listed a total of 340 species including 82 amphibian and 258 reptile species. The number of herpetofaunal species increased to 458 in an updated checklist by Nguyen et al. (2005) (i.e., 162 species amphibians and 296 species of reptiles). This checklist includes 200 additional species compared with the previous checklist of

the herpetofauna of Vietnam. This increase in our knowledge about the amphibian and reptile fauna is a result of herpetological cooperations throughout the last over 25 years (1980-2006).

Involved agencies

Vietnam's herpetofauna has been studied with the collaborative involvement of scientists both from Vietnam and from overseas. Institutions and organizations from abroad include the American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA (AMNH); Appalachian State University, North Carolina, USA (ASU); Chelonian Research Institute, Florida, USA (CRI); Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, California, USA (LACM); Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada (ROM); Zoological Institute of Saint Petersburg, Russian Academy of Science, Saint Petersburg, Russia (ZISP); Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn (ZFMK), and the Cologne Zoo, Cologne, Germany; National Museum of Natural Science, Taichung, Taiwan (NMNS). Institutions and organizations within Vietnam comprise Birdlife International (Birdlife); CARE International in Vietnam; Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES), Fauna and Flora International - Vietnam Programme (FFI); Hanoi National University; Hanoi University of Education (HUE); Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR), Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology (VAST); PLAN International in Vietnam; The World Union for Conservation (IUCN); Traffic Southeast Asia; Wildlife At Risk in Vietnam (WAR); Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF - Indochina Program).

Fields of study and remarkable achievements

Collaboration of Vietnam's herpetology has focused on two fields: discovery of herpetofaunal diversity and conservation of threatened species.

Many surveys of herpetofaunal diversity have been conducted in different areas of the country, resulting in the discovery and description of three new genera, 79 new species and three new sub-species based on voucher collections from 1980 to 2006 (Table 1). Furthermore, at least 90 new records for Vietnam have been reported over this period. Results of these surveys showed that upland areas contain a high diversity of amphibian and reptile species. Several hotspots of the herpetofauna were defined in Vietnam comprising

Table 1. List of new species of reptiles and amphibians described based on voucher specimens from Vietnam (1980-2006).

No	Scientific name	Type locality
	AMPHIBIA	
1.	<i>Tylotriton vietnamensis</i> Böhme, Schöttler, Nguyen and Köhler, 2005	Luc Nam, Bac Giang Province
2.	<i>Leptobranchium banae</i> Lathrop, Murphy, Orlov and Ho, 1998	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
3.	<i>Leptobranchium xanthospilum</i> Lathrop, Murphy, Orlov and Ho, 1998	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
4.	<i>Leptolalax bourreti</i> Dubois, 1980	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
5.	<i>Leptolalax nahangensis</i> Lathrop, Murphy, Orlov and Ho, 1998	Na Hang, Tuyen Quang Province
6.	<i>Leptolalax pluvialis</i> Ohler, Marquis, Swan and Grosjean, 2000	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
7.	<i>Leptolalax sungi</i> Lathrop, Murphy, Orlov and Ho, 1998	Tam Dao, Vinh Phuc Province
8.	<i>Leptolalax tuberosus</i> Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999	Kon Cha Rang, Gia Lai Province
9.	<i>Ophryophryne gerti</i> Ohler, 2003	Da Lat, Lam Dong Province
10.	<i>Ophryophryne hansi</i> Ohler, 2003	Da Lat, Lam Dong Province
11.	<i>Vibrissaphora echinata</i> Dubois and Ohler, 1998	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
12.	<i>Vibrissaphora ngoclinhensis</i> Orlov, 2005	Dak Glei, Kon Tum Province
13.	<i>Microhyla marmorata</i> Bain and Nguyen, 2004	Tra My, Quang Nam Province
14.	<i>Microhyla nanapollexa</i> Bain and Nguyen, 2004	Tra My, Quang Nam Province
15.	<i>Microhyla pulverata</i> Bain and Nguyen, 2004	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
16.	<i>Micryletta erythropoda</i> (Tarkhnishvili, 1994)	Ma Da, Dong Nai Province
17.	<i>Amolops spinapectoralis</i> Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
18.	<i>Paa bourreti</i> Dubois, 1987	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
19.	<i>Rana attigua</i> Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
20.	<i>Rana bacboensis</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	Con Cuong, Nghe An Province
21.	<i>Rana banaorum</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
22.	<i>Rana cucae</i> Bain, Stuart and Orlov, 2006	Van Ban, Lao Cai Province
23.	<i>Rana daorum</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
24.	<i>Rana hmongorum</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
25.	<i>Rana iriodes</i> Bain and Nguyen, 2004	Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang Province
26.	<i>Rana khalam</i> Stuart, Orlov, and Tanya, 2005	Bach Ma, Thua Thien Hue, Lao Cai Provinces (Paratypes)
27.	<i>Rana megatypanum</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	Con Cuong, Nghe An Province
28.	<i>Rana morafkai</i> Bain, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2003	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
29.	<i>Rana orba</i> Stuart and Bain, 2005	Huong Son, Ha Tinh Province (Paratypes)
30.	<i>Rana trunkieni</i> Orlov, Le and Ho, 2003	Phu Yen, Son La Province
31.	<i>Aquixalus (Chirixalus) ananjevae</i> (Matsui and Orlov, 2004)	Huong Khe, Ha Tinh Province
32.	<i>Aquixalus (Rhacophorus) baliogaster</i> (Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999)	Buon Luoi, Tram Lap and Krong Pa, Gia Lai Province
33.	<i>Aquixalus (Philautus) supercornutus</i> (Orlov, Ho and Nguyen, 2004)	Bach Ma, Thua Thien Hue Province
34.	<i>Philautus abditus</i> Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
35.	<i>Philautus truongsongensis</i> Orlov and Ho, 2005	Huong Hoa, Quang Tri Province
36.	<i>Rhacophorus duboisi</i> Orler, Marquis, Swan and Grosjean, 2000	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
37.	<i>Rhacophorus exechopygus</i> Inger, Orlov and Darevsky, 1999	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
38.	<i>Rhacophorus hoanglienensis</i> Orlov, Lathrop, Murphy and Ho, 2001	Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province
39.	<i>Rhacophorus orlovi</i> Ziegler and Köhler, 2000	Ky Anh, Ha Tinh Province
	REPTILIA	
	Sauria	
1.	<i>Acanthosaura nataliae</i> Orlov, Nguyen and Nguyen, 2006	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
2.	<i>Bronchocela orlovi</i> Hallermann, 2004	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
3.	<i>Bronchocela vietnamensis</i> Hallermann and Orlov, 2005	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
4.	<i>Leiolepis guentherpetersi</i> Darevsky and Kupriyanova, 1993	Thuy Phu, Thua Thien-Hue Province
5.	<i>Cyrtodactylus paradoxus</i> (Darevsky and Szczerbak, 1997)	Phu Quoc, Kien Giang Province
6.	<i>Cyrtodactylus phongnhakebangensis</i> Ziegler, Rösler, Herrmann, and Vu, 2002	Phong Nha-Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province

Table 1 (continued). List of new species of reptiles and amphibians described based on voucher specimens from Vietnam (1980-2006).

No	Scientific name	Type locality
7.	<i>Dixonius vietnamensis</i> Das, 2004	Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province
8.	<i>Gekko grossmanni</i> Gunther, 1994	Khanh Hoa Province
9.	<i>Gekko scientiadventura</i> Rösler, Ziegler, Vu, Herrmann, and Böhme, 2005	Phong Nha - Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
10.	<i>Gekko ulikovskii</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 1994	Kon Tum Province
11.	<i>Goniurosaurus araneus</i> Grismer, Viets, and Boyle, 1999	Cao Bang Province
12.	<i>Hemidactylus stejnegeri</i> Ota and Hikida, 1989	Ba Mun, Quang Ninh Province
13.	<i>Hemidactylus vietnamensis</i> Darevsky and Kupriyanova, 1984	Cuc Phuong, Ninh Binh Province
14.	<i>Dibamus deharvengi</i> Ineich, 1999	Binh Chau, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province
15.	<i>Dibamus greeri</i> Darevsky, 1992	Kon Cha Rang, Kon Tum Province
16.	<i>Dibamus kondaoensis</i> Honda, Ota, Hikida and Darevsky, 2001	Con Dao, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province
17.	<i>Dibamus smithi</i> Greer, 1985	Da Lat, Lam Dong Province
18.	<i>Takydromus hani</i> Chou, Nguyen and Pauwels, 2001	Huong Son, Ha Tinh Province
19.	<i>Takydromus kuehnei vietnamensis</i> Ziegler and Bischoff, 1999	Ke Go, Ha Tinh Province
20.	<i>Leptoseps tetradactylus</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 2005	Phong Nha-Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
21.	<i>Lygosoma carinatum</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 1996	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
22.	<i>Mabuya darevskii</i> Bobrov, 1992	Cao Pha, Son La Province
	Paralipinia Darevsky and Orlov, 1997	
23.	<i>Paralipinia rara</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 1997	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
24.	<i>Sphenomorphus buenloicus</i> Darevsky and Nguyen, 1983	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
25.	<i>Sphenomorphus cryptotis</i> Darevsky, Orlov and Ho, 2004	Uong Bi, Quang Ninh Province
26.	<i>Sphenomorphus devorator</i> Darevsky, Orlov and Ho, 2004	Uong Bi, Quang Ninh Province
27.	<i>Sphenomorphus rufocaudatus</i> Darevsky and Nguyen, 1983	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
28.	<i>Tropidophorus murphyi</i> Hikida, Orlov, Nabhitabhata and Ota, 2002	Nguyen Binh, Cao Bang Province
29.	<i>Tropidophorus noggei</i> Ziegler, Vu and Bui, 2005	Phong Nha - Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
	Vietnascincus Darevsky and Orlov, 1994	
30.	<i>Vietnascincus rugosus</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 1994	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
31.	<i>Ophisaurus sokolovi</i> Darevsky and Nguyen, 1983	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
	Serpentes	
32.	<i>Amphiesma andreae</i> Ziegler and Le, 2006	Minh Hoa, Quang Binh Province
33.	<i>Boiga bourreti</i> Tillack, Ziegler and Le, 2004	Phong Nha-Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
34.	<i>Calamaria lovii ingermarxorum</i> Darevsky and Orlov, 1992	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
35.	<i>Calamaria thanhi</i> Ziegler and Le, 2005	Minh Hoa, Quang Binh Province
36.	<i>Opisthotrophis daovantieni</i> Orlov, Darevsky and Murphy, 1998	K Bang, Gia Lai Province
37.	<i>Bungarus slowinskii</i> Kuch, Kizirian, Nguyen, Lawson, Donnelly, and Mebs, 2005	Van Yen, Yen Bai Province
	Triceratolepidophis Ziegler, Herrmann, David, Orlov and Pauwels, 2000	
38.	<i>Triceratolepidophis sieversorum</i> Ziegler, Herrmann, David, Orlov and Pauwels, 2000	Phong Nha-Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
39.	<i>Trimeresurus truongsongensis</i> Orlov, Ryabov, Bui and Ho, 2004	Phong Nha-Ke Bang, Quang Binh Province
	TESTUDINES	
40.	<i>Cuora bourreti</i> (Obst and Reimann, 1994)	Linh Cam, Ha Tinh Province
41.	<i>Cuora mouhoti obsti</i> Fritz, Andreas and Lehr, 1998	Central Vietnam
42.	<i>Cuora picturata</i> (Lehr, Fritz and Obst, 1998)	Central Vietnam
43.	<i>Cyclemys pulchriatrata</i> Fritz, Gaulke and Lehr, 1997	Phuoc Son, Quang Nam Province

Fansipan Mountain in the northwestern region; Bac Son and Yen Tu mountains in the northeastern region; Truong Son Range and Tay Nguyen Plateau in the centre of the country; and Me Kong River Basin in the south [Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam, 1995]. These areas contain a large expanse of primary vegetation and they still require future research

At present, main threats to the herpetofauna in Vietnam are identified including overexploitation for trade and consumption and habitat loss as a result of forest land alteration. Some specific conservation programs for reptiles and amphibians are being implemented in different protected areas in an effort to mitigate threats to the herpetofauna. Turtles are currently known as the most threatened group because of the high demand of consumption and trade in the Indochinese region. A few conservation projects for both freshwater and marine turtles have been implemented in Vietnam, and the Turtle Conservation and Ecology Project in Cuc Phuong National Park was known as the first conservation centre for reptiles in Vietnam. Moreover, governmental rescue centres for wild animals have been established in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh cities and in other national parks in Central Vietnam for releasing confiscated wildlife. The population of the Vietnamese salamander *Paramesotriton deloustali*, an endemic species of Vietnam, is recuperating with the efforts of the conservation project at the Tam Dao National Park and buffer zone (Nguyen and Ho, 2004).

Many results have been published as a result of this successful research collaboration (see extended references section). Several field guides (e.g., Photographic guide to the turtles of Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia [Stuart et al., 2001]; Reptiles and amphibians of Cuc Phuong National Park [Nguyen et al., 2003]; A field guide to reptiles and amphibians of Vietnam [Nguyen et al., 2005]; Amphibians and reptiles of Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve [Le et al., 2004]) and checklists (e.g., Herpetofauna of Vietnam. A checklist. Part 1. Amphibia [Orlov et al., 2002]; A checklist of amphibians and reptiles of Vietnam [Nguyen et al., 2005]) have appeared both in English and Vietnamese. Furthermore, a hundred articles of herpetofaunal diversity and descriptions of new taxa have been published in international and national journals during period from 1980 to 2006.

Further opportunities for collaboration

Vietnam's herpetofauna is still imperfectly known, and many areas remain either un-explored or under-

surveyed, as indicated by the numerous new species being described in such a short period of time. In order to ensure that Vietnam's herpetofauna can be more closely understood and better protected, efforts should be focused in three important fields: 1) Diversity studies, which include field surveys for presence and novel natural history information, detailed study of natural history museum specimens, and the combination of both of these in morphological and genetic studies; 2) conservation, including monitoring at population level and evaluation of threats to herpetofauna and concomitant assignment of priority areas for herpetofaunal conservation; and 3) training for workers in the fields of science and conservation: training for scientists from institutions and universities, training for natural resource managers, training for staff from protected areas, and improvement of scientific capacity (equipment, collection management, information exchange and literatures). Perhaps most important to the overall success of this enterprise are the ongoing efforts to strengthen the collaboration between scientists and conservation managers so that information can be collected, disseminated, and ultimately used to guide decision-making in a systematic and timely manner.

Acknowledgements. The author would like to thank Raoul H. Bain (American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA) and Thomas Ziegler (Cologne Zoo, Cologne, Germany) for their helpful comments on the manuscript. Altering their advice was done so at own risk and any errors in the manuscript are those of the author.

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