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A new highland species of *Pristimantis* Jiménez de la Espada, 1871 (Anura: Strabomantidae) from the Pantepui region, northern South America

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Abstract

A new strabomantid frog of the genus *Pristimantis* Jiménez de la Espada, 1871 is described from the Eastern Pantepui Region, Guiana Shield, northern South America. The new species, *Pristimantis aureoventris* **sp. nov.**, is known so far from two neighbouring tepuis, namely Wei Assipu Tepui (type locality) at the border between Guyana and Brazil and Mount Roraima in Guyana, and occurs between 2210–2305 m elevation. The new taxon is distinguished from all known congeners by the following combination of characters: Finger I < II; tympanum distinct; basal webbing between Toes IV-V; broad lateral fringes on fingers and toes; ventral skin areolate; vocal slits absent in male; two non-spinous whitish nuptial pads and vocal sac present in male; high degree of pattern polymorphism; throat, chest, and belly golden yellow, usually with reddish brown to dark brown mottling; internal organs little or not visible through the ventral skin in life. The call of the new species consists of bouts of a single amplitude-modulated (decreasing to the end) note repeated at a rate of *ca*. 18 notes/min with a dominant frequency ranging from 2180 to 2430 Hz.

Key words: Amphibia, Brazil, Guiana Shield, Guyana, Mount Roraima, systematics, taxonomy, Venezuela, Wei Assipu Tepui

Introduction

The genus *Pristimantis* Jiménez de la Espada, 1871 was resurrected by Heinicke *et al.* (2007), who split the speciose genus *Eleutherodactylus* into three genera on the basis of molecular evidence: *Eleutherodactylus* was restricted to the "Caribbean Clade", the members of the "South American Clade" were allocated to the genus *Pristimantis*, whereas the members of the "Middle American Clade" were allocated to the genus *Craugastor.* Soon after, further molecular support for this hypothesis was provided by Hedges *et al*. (2008), who allocated *Pristimantis* and 16 additional genera previously placed in the family Brachycephalidae by Frost *et al*. (2006) in the new family Strabomantidae.

Recently, Heinicke *et al*. (2009) erected the new family Ceuthomantidae and the new genus *Ceuthomantis* to accommodate a new species from the Pakaraima Mountains of Guyana (*C. smaragdinus* Heinicke, Duellman, Trueb, Means, MacCulloch & Hedges, 2009), and proposed the placement of *Pristimantis aracamuni* (Barrio-Amorós & Molina, 2006) and *P. cavernibardus* (Myers & Donnelly, 1997) in the new family and genus based on morphological similarities. Barrio-Amorós (2010) then described *Pristimantis cf. cavernibardus* from Sarisariñama Tepui as *Ceuthomantis duellmani*.

To date, the genus *Pristimantis* contains more than 430 described species, 21 of which are distributed in the Pantepui region (Barrio-Amorós *et al.* 2010, Frost 2011), a biogeographic province referring to the complex of mountains (most of them called "tepuis") mainly derived from the sandstone of the Roraima Group in southern Venezuela, northwestern Guyana and northern Brazil (McDiarmid & Donnelly 2005) (Fig. 1). Among these 21

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