



A new *Philautus* (Anura: Rhacophoridae) from northern Laos allied to *P. abditus* Inger, Orlov & Darevsky, 1999

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Abstract

The small rhacophorid frog *Philautus abditus* is geographically restricted to central Vietnam and adjacent Cambodia. Our fieldwork in northern Laos resulted in the discovery of a *Philautus* species that very closely resembles *P. abditus*, but is at least 330 km from the nearest known locality of that species. The Laos population differs from *P. abditus* in mitochondrial DNA and coloration, and is described here as a new species. *Philautus nianeae* sp. nov. is distinguished from its congeners by having the combination of a hidden tympanum; no nuptial pads; smooth skin; large black spots on the hidden surfaces of the hind limbs; light venter with dark spotting; and a bronze iris. A second species of *Philautus* from northern Laos, *P. petilus*, is transferred on the basis of morphology to the genus *Theلودerma*.

Key words: Laos; new species; *Philautus abditus*; *Philautus petilus*; Rhacophoridae

Introduction

The rhacophorid frog genus *Philautus* Gistel, 1848 has a turbulent taxonomic history (Bossuyt & Dubois 2001; Hertwig *et al.* 2012; Frost 2013). Eighty-four species of *Philautus* were recognized in a recent nomenclatural review (Bossuyt & Dubois 2001), but many of these species have since been transferred to other genera of rhacophorids, primarily on the basis of evidence derived from molecular phylogenetic analyses (e.g., Frost *et al.* 2006; Li *et al.* 2008; Li *et al.* 2009). No morphological synapomorphy is currently known for *Philautus*. The genus has been defined in the past as rhacophorids lacking vomerine teeth (Liem, 1970), or lacking a free-swimming aquatic larva (Bossuyt & Dubois 2001), but these definitions have not been supported by molecular phylogenetic analyses (Hertwig *et al.* 2012). As currently recognized, the genus *Philautus* contains approximately 50 species (Frost 2013), most of which are relatively small and arboreal. The genus is distributed from India to the Philippines, with the greatest species diversity occurring in Borneo and the Philippines (Brown & Alcala 1994; Hertwig *et al.* 2012; Frost 2013).

Our recent fieldwork in northern Laos revealed a *Philautus* that bears remarkable similarity to *P. abditus* Inger, Orlov & Darevsky 1999, a species that is restricted to central Vietnam and adjacent northeastern Cambodia (Nguyen *et al.* 2009; Stuart *et al.* 2010) at least 330 km southeast of the Laos locality (the nearest known record of *P. abditus* is in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam; Figure 1). Despite the similarity, the Laos specimens differ from *P. abditus* in coloration and mitochondrial DNA (the call of *P. abditus* is unknown), and are herein described as a new species.

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