



## A new species of ‘spike-nosed’ frog from northern New Guinea (Anura: Hylidae: *Litoria*)

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### Abstract

A new species of frog with a prominent rostral spike is described from the Sepik Basin, northern lowlands of Papua New Guinea. The new species is most similar to *Litoria prora* (Menzies) and *L. humboldtorum* Günther but differs from those species in its smaller size, reduced dermal lappets on the limbs, and unique advertisement call. It is the sixth species of Australopapuan hylid frog known to possess a dermal projection on the snout.

**Key words:** Amphibia, Hylidae, new species, advertisement call, Papua New Guinea

### Introduction

Within the speciose Australopapuan genus *Litoria* five species are currently known to exhibit a conspicuous rostral ‘spike’ (Menzies 1969; 1993; Günther 2006). Relationships among the five species, *Litoria havina* Menzies, 1993, *L. humboldtorum* Günther, 2006, *L. mucro* Menzies, 1993, *L. pronimia* Menzies, 1993 and *L. prora* (Menzies, 1969) are unclear. Menzies (1993) considered three of them (*L. havina*, *L. mucro* and *L. pronimia*) to have affinities with the montane *L. iris* (Tyler, 1962), but was unwilling to associate *L. prora* with these taxa.

*Litoria prora* is a moderately large frog (males 40–44.5 mm SVL; Menzies 1969, Richards 2002) that differs from *L. havina*, *L. mucro* and *L. pronimia* by its much larger size, and fully webbed fingers. With its extensive dermal crenulations on the limbs and lower jaw *L. prora* is one of New Guinea’s most distinctive hylid frogs. Its reproductive behaviour was unknown until Richards (2002) documented this species laying large eggs on leaves over small forest pools. *Litoria prora* is known from widely scattered localities in the high-rainfall belt (Hyndman & Menzies 1990) along the southern slopes of Papua New Guinea’s central cordillera (e.g. Richards 2002).

The description from north-western New Guinea by Günther (2006) of *Litoria humboldtorum*, a distinctive ‘spike-nosed’ frog that is clearly related to *L. prora*, raised the possibility that additional species of frog exhibiting this bizarre morphological trait await discovery. During field work in the Sepik Basin of northern Papua New Guinea, Mr Chris Dahl collected a series of frogs with a prominent rostral spine and well-developed dermal ornamentation on the limbs. The new species is most similar to *L. prora* and *L. humboldtorum* but differs from them by its smaller size, relatively reduced dermal ornamentation and in having a different advertisement call.