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## **Coccidia (Apicomplexa: Eimeriidae) of amphibians of the world**

DONALD W. DUSZYNSKI, MATTHEW G. BOLEK & STEVE J. UPTON



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### Table of contents

Abstract .....	4
Introduction .....	4
Methods.....	5
Results .....	7
AMPHIBIA .....	13
ANURA Fischer von Waldheim 1893-Frogs .....	13
Family Bombinatoridae Gray 1825 .....	13
Host genus <i>Bombina</i> Oken 1816 .....	13
Family Bufonidae Gray 1825 .....	20
Host genus <i>Bufo</i> Laurenti 1768 .....	20
Host genus <i>Chaunus</i> Wagler 1828 .....	22
Host genus <i>Duttaphrynus</i> Frost et al. 2006 .....	23
Host genus <i>Pseudepidalea</i> Frost et al. 2006 .....	26
Family Dicroglossidae Anderson 1871.....	27
Host genus <i>Euphlyctis</i> Fitzinger 1843 .....	27
Host genus <i>Hoplobatrachus</i> Peters 1863.....	27
Family Hylidae Rafinesque 1815 .....	28
Host genus <i>Hyla</i> Laurenti 1768 .....	28
Host genus <i>Pseudacris</i> Fitzinger 1843 .....	29
Host genus <i>Scinax</i> Wagler 1830 .....	33
Family Hyperoliidae Laurent 1943 .....	33
Host genus <i>Hyperolius</i> Rapp 1842 .....	33
Family Leptodactylidae Werner 1896 .....	35
Host genus <i>Leptodactylus</i> Fitzinger 1826 .....	35
Family Microhylidae Günther 1858 .....	36
Host genus <i>Gastrophryne</i> Fitzinger 1843 .....	36
Family: Ranidae Rafinesque 1814 .....	37
Host genus <i>Lithobates</i> Fitzinger 1843 .....	37
Host genus <i>Pelophylax</i> Fitzinger 1843 .....	39
Host genus <i>Rana</i> Linnaeus 1758.....	44
Family Rhacophoridae Hoffman 1932 .....	46
Host genus <i>Chiromantis</i> Peters 1854.....	46
URODELA (CAUDATA) Fischer von Waldheim 1813-Salamanders .....	47
Family Ambystomatidae Gray 1850 .....	47
Host genus <i>Ambystoma</i> Tschudi 1838.....	47
Family Plethodontidae Gray 1850 .....	52
Host genus <i>Plethodon</i> Tschudi 1838.....	52

Family Salamandridae Goldfuss 1820 .....	53
Host genus <i>Cynops</i> Tschudi 1838 .....	53
Host genus <i>Mesotriton</i> Bolkay 1927 .....	55
Host genus <i>Notophthalmus</i> Rafinesque 1820 .....	57
Host genus <i>Salamandra</i> Laurenti 1768.....	58
Host genus <i>Taricha</i> Gray 1850.....	60
Host genus <i>Triturus</i> Rafinesque 1815 .....	60
GYMNOPHIONA Müller 1832-Caecilians .....	62
Family Caeciliidae Rafinesque 1814 .....	62
Host genus <i>Dermophis</i> Peters 1880 .....	62
Species inquirendae, incertae sedis, nomina nuda and non-valid designations .....	63
ANURA (frogs).....	64
Incertae sedis (16) .....	64
Nomina nuda (2).....	65
Species inquirendae (9).....	66
URODELA (salamanders) .....	67
Incertae sedis (6) .....	67
Nomina nuda (3).....	68
Species inquirendae (1).....	69
GYMNOPHIONA (caecilians) .....	69
Non-valid designations.....	69
Discussion .....	69
Acknowledgments.....	72
Literature cited .....	73

## Abstract

The coccidia are protists (phylum Apicomplexa) that, likely, are both the most abundant (numbers of individual zoites) and most speciose of all the kinds of parasites found in, or on vertebrate animals. They also are among the least studied and understood, with the exception of those species that cause pathology in domesticated hosts. Here we review and evaluate all published descriptions of coccidians within the largest family of the phylum, Eimeriidae Minchin 1903, because there has never been a detailed taxonomic summation for those species that infect amphibians. About 35 of the named species are invalid, either because rules concerning the naming of new species (International Code of Zoological Nomenclature) were not followed and/or the original description was so incomplete as to be of little use; such names have been relegated to *species inquirendae*, *incertae sedis*, or *nomen nuda*. The class Amphibia has three orders, 56 families, 464 genera and 6009 species (Frost *et al.* 2006). There are no coccidia known from 41 of the 56 (73%) families, 436 of the 464 (94%) genera and 5964 of the 6009 (>99%) species. In the Anura (frogs), only 14 of the 44 (32%) families (Bombinatoridae, Bufonidae, Dicoglossidae, Hylidae, Hyperoliidae, Leptodactyllidae, Limnodynastidae, Megophryidae, Microhylidae, Pipidae, Ptychadenidae, Pyxicephalidae, Ranidae, Rhacophoridae), 30 of the 388 (8.8%) genera, and 67 of the 5283 (1.2%) species have been examined for coccidia and 30 coccidia are known (18 *Eimeria*, 9 *Isospora*, 2 *Goussia*, and 1 *Hyaloklossia* species). In the Urodela (salamanders), 7 of the 9 (78%) families (Ambystomatidae, Amphiumidae, Cryptobranchidae, Plethodontidae, Proteidae, Salamandridae, Sirenidae), 18 of the 64 (28%) genera and 45 of the 553 (8%) species have been examined and 21 coccidia are known (19 *Eimeria* and 2 *Isospora* species). In the Gymnophiona (caecilians), only 1 of 3 (33%) families, 1 of 12 (8%) genera, and only 1 of the 173 (0.6%) species, *Dermophis mexicanus* (family Caeciliidae), have been examined and 1 *Eimeria* species is known. Also in the Amphibia, there are 10 *species inquirendae* (a species of doubtful identity), 22 *incertae sedis* (uncertain taxonomic position), and 5 names are considered *nomen nuda*. In general, herpetologists are encouraged to be more receptive to working with parasitologists to use comparative parasite data that might provide insights into amphibian evolution and habitat use. The eimeriid coccidia are ideal parasites for such cooperative efforts because they can be collected easily by noninvasive fecal collections.

**Key words:** Eimeriidae, *Eimeria*, *Isospora*, *Goussia*, *Hyaloklossia*, review article