



## Rediscovery of a long known species, *Ixalus lateralis* Anderson, 1871

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### Abstract

The genus *Leptotalax* Dubois, 1980 is for the first time reported from India. The nomen *Ixalus lateralis* Anderson 1871, created for a specimen from an unknown type locality, probably in North-East India, is applied to this species. A neotype is designated to stabilize the taxonomic status of this nomen and to fix a precise type locality.

**Key words:** Amphibia, Megophryidae, *Ixalus lateralis*, neotype

### Introduction

In Günther's (1864) *Reptiles of British India*, the Asian representatives of the family Pelobatidae, which nowadays correspond to the Megophryidae of most authors, only counted two species: *Megophrys montana* Kuhl & Van Hasselt, 1822 and *Xenophrys monticola* Günther, 1864. The latter was a taxon including various species of the genus *Xenophrys* Günther, 1864 as currently recognized (Delorme *et al.* 2006). Beside these nomina, *Bombinator sikimmensis* Blyth, 1855, a member of *Scutigera* Theobald, 1868 and *Ceratophryne nasuta* Schlegel, 1858, then considered a synonym of *Megophrys montana*, were coined for this family until the 1870ies.

Anderson (1871: 29) described the species *Ixalus lateralis* on a single specimen without type locality. This specimen was found in a jar in the collection of the Indian Museum of Calcutta together with a specimen of *Xenophrys monticola*. Anderson gave a description, according to the standards of the time. The nomen thus was based on a unique specimen, the holotype by monotypy.

In 1879, in the *Results of the Yunnan expedition*, Anderson reported the collection of several specimens of this species and gave a figure (plate 78, fig. 5) of one of them. Anderson (1879: 844) discussed morphological differences between these specimens and the holotype of *Ixalus lateralis*. Thus the specimens mentioned and figured in 1879 are different from the holotype and neither their characters nor their collection locality are stringent for establishing the identity of *Ixalus lateralis*.

Sclater (1892: 33) listed the specimen ZSI 10967 in the Calcutta Museum as the holotype of *Ixalus lateralis*, but this specimen was not traced by Chanda *et al.* (2000) in this collection, and there exists no published evidence that any author examined this specimen after Anderson (1879). This holotype being unavailable, subsequent authors based their allocation of the nomen on the figure on plate 78 of Anderson (1879). The figures of this book are not of excellent quality, as body shapes of frogs figured are not natural. Thus the identity of this nominal species has been a subject of discussion since.