

First record of melanism in *Rhinella scitula* (Amphibia: Anura: Bufonidae)

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RESUMEN: En esta nota se describe el primer caso de melanismo en rana hoja (*Rhinella scitula*), correspondiente a un ejemplar adulto encontrado en abril de 2022 en Bodoquena, Mato Grosso do Sul (Brazil).

Numerous chromatic mutations have been documented in amphibians worldwide, with melanism, characterized by a high concentration of melanin in pigment cells, being the most prevalent (Rivera *et al.*, 2001). Several amphibian species have been reported with melanistic individuals, including Salamanders: *Catolritron asper* (Arribas & Rivera, 2014), *Lissotriton boscai* (Bermejo & Otero, 2011), *Salamandra salamandra* (Palau, 1999), and *Triturus marmoratus* (Domènech, 2001). In the anuran species *Alytes obstetricans*, both fully melanistic and partially melanistic individuals have been recorded

(Galán *et al.*, 1990; Espasandín, 2017). Additionally, melanism in frogs, has been suggested as a protection mechanism against ultraviolet and ionizing radiation (Burraco & Orizaola, 2022).

Rhinella scitula is a small-sized Bufonid belonging to the *Rhinella margaritifera* group, primarily found within gallery forests near temporary or permanent streams (Caramaschi & Niemeyer, 2003). It is located in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, with its type locality in the municipality of Bonito (Caramaschi & Niemeyer, 2003). The species is also present in Bodoquena, Piraputanga, and Aquidauana (Maragno & Souza, 2007) in Brazil and in Amambay and Concepción in Paraguay (Brusquetti & Lavilla, 2006).

The observation occurred in April 2022 in a preserved riparian forest near a waterfall (20°33'4.28"S / 56°38'6.23"W) in the municipality of Bodoquena, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil during a nocturnal hike at around 10:20 a.m. We encountered an adult individual of *Rhinella scitula* with melanistic coloration on the forest floor (Figure 1). The individual was photographed but not collected due to a lack of environmental authorization. This marks the first documented instance of melanism in *Rhinella scitula*.



Figure 1: Melanic *Rhinella scitula* recorded in the municipality of Bodoquena, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil.

Figura 1: *Rhinella scitula* melánico fotografiado en el municipio de Bodoquena, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brasil.

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