

Adventitious scavenging by Cuban Treefrog tadpoles, *Osteopilus septentrionalis* (Anura: Hylidae)

Katrina B. Street, John S. Parmerlee, Jr., and Robert Powell*

Cuban Treefrogs (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) are native to Cuba, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands (Meshaka 2001). Introduced populations have become established in the southern United States and on a number of West Indian islands (Meshaka 2001; Kraus 2009; Powell et al. 2011), where they compete with and prey on native species (e.g., Owen 2005).

Adults are opportunistic carnivores, with diets comprised primarily of invertebrates, but small vertebrates also are consumed (Meshaka 2001 and references therein; Glorioso et al. 2012). However, little is known about larval diets. Crump (1986) documented cannibalism of conspecifics, and Meshaka (2001) noted that tadpoles usually consume algae, but also recorded incidents of predation on freshly laid and developing eggs of conspecifics and other frogs. Herein we report on Cuban Treefrog tadpoles scavenging carcasses of two different insects.

On 8 June 2012 at the Cape Eleuthera Institute, Eleuthera, Commonwealth of the Bahamas (24°49'58.10"N, 76°19'28.37"W), we observed Cuban Treefrog tadpoles scavenging the remains of insects floating in a freshwater aquaculture tank. The interior dimensions of the U-shaped tank consisted of a base and two legs that measured 2.9 x 1.2 m and 2.9 x 1.2 m, respectively. Water depth was approximately 0.5 m, for a total volume of ~5.7 m³. An angled canvas shade cover likely functioned as a rudimentary malaise trap, directing flying insects into the tank.

The two scavenged insects consisted of a bird grasshopper (*Schistocerca cubense*, Acrididae; Figure 1) and a darkling beetle (*Nautes azurescens*, Tenebrionidae; Figure 2). The lack of obvious algal growth in the tank might have necessitated the scavenging behavior. This is the first documentation of Cuban Treefrog tadpoles feeding on invertebrate carcasses.

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Figure 1. Cuban Treefrog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) tadpoles scavenging a Bird Grasshopper (*Schistocerca cubense*, Acrididae) on Eleuthera, Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Photographs by KBS (left) and JSP (right).

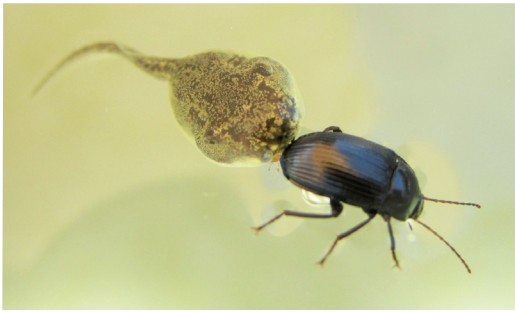


Figure 2. Cuban Treefrog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) tadpole scavenging a Darkling Beetle (*Nautes azurescens*, Tenebrionidae) on Eleuthera, Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Photograph by KBS.