

## (III)

**AMPHIBIAN FAUNA OF TANSAL WILDLIFE SANCTUARY,  
DISTRICT THANE, MAHARASHTRA**

The Western Ghats, due to their unique topography and climatic conditions, harbour rich faunal diversity particularly herpetofauna. Out of 209 species of amphibians recorded from India, 114 are present in the Western Ghats. Amphibians are poikilothermic i.e. cold blooded so the factors such as temperature, humidity and rainfall play very important role in their lifecycle. Thus if there are any changes in the environmental conditions the amphibians affect first. Due to indiscriminate use of pesticides, modern agricultural practices, developmental activities and deforestation the Western Ghats region is under tremendous pressure, the effect of which can be seen on the decline in the amphibian population. About 50% of the amphibian fauna in India is endemic. Apart from their richness and endemism, their study is not in pace with that of the other groups of vertebrates. Most of their study in the Western Ghats is restricted to the Southern part. Very little data is available on the amphibian fauna of the Northern region.

The Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the northernmost region of the Western Ghats (19° to 19° 25 and 70°10 to 73°25 E), in Thane District, Maharashtra. The sanctuary covers an area of 21675.00 ha. The forest is of South Indian Moist Deciduous type with the primary vegetation of *Tectona grandis*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Madhuca indica*,

*Bombax ceiba* etc. This sanctuary was visited by the author from June 21st to 23rd, 1999. Both day and night surveys were made. The direct search method which involves close visual inspection of trees and shrubs upto height of 1.2 - 1.5m, a careful search of the ground, turning over litter, stones, rocks and rotten logs etc., was followed. All the specimens are observed, measurements taken and released.

Following are the amphibians recorded from Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary :

**Family : Ranidae**

1. *Holobatrachus tigerinus* : Very common. Found in small ponds, streams and also in fields. Few were seen calling during the day time. Two specimens observed, SV - 72mm and 75mm respectively.

2. *Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis* : Common. Inhabits small ponds, streams etc. frequently seen during the day time but common during the night. Four specimens observed. SV - 54mm, 52mm, 43mm and 40mm respectively.

3. *Limnonectes limnocharis* : Common. Found in small ponds, streams etc. Seen during night only. Two specimens observed, both are male. It was heard, calling from grass under a small sized tree near the rain pool. Both are recorded from the same area. SV - 36mm and 38mm respectively.

4. *Rana malabarica* : Common. Seen during night only. Recorded from a temporary, shallow, stream in the open ground covered with grass. They are floating at the edge of the stream with their heads just above water and are calling. They are not seen from the temporary pond of the same habitat and also from the forest area. Some are seen on the road. 3 specimens observed, SV - 65mm, 62mm and 56mm respectively.

5. *Tomopterna breviceps* : Uncommon. Two specimens observed. Both are recorded during night. After heavy shower, while moving on one of the forest paths leading to the forest rest house, a frog crossing the road was seen. Another was seen in the forest under a medium sized stone. The one seen on forest path was with brown colour and the other observed in forest was of dark grey colour. Two specimens observed, SV - 51mm and 53mm respectively.

**Family : Microhylidae**

6. *Microhyla ornata* : Common. Seen during night only. Fairly common in all areas. Its call was heard from the grass, near the rainwater pool; it was detected after careful

observation. Second was seen under the leaf litter below a *Tectona grandis* tree a temporary pond. Two specimens observed, SV - 22mm and 21mm respectively.

**Family : Rhacophoridae**

7. *Polypedates maculatus* : Common. Seen only during night. Recorded from the trees near a temporary rain water pool. Their calls were heard from the trees. Large number of egg masses were seen floating in this pool. A pair was seen in amplexus on the ground, under a small bush near this pool. This pair was collected and the female laid the eggs in the container. These eggs were brought to BNHS and author tried to observe the lifecycle, but only few larvae survived. Four specimens were observed, 3 male and 1 female, SV - 52mm (Female), 38mm, 35mm and 37mm (Male) respectively.

**Family : Bufonidae**

8. *Bufo melanostictus* : Common. Seen at night only. Two specimens were observed. Both were seen on the road. SV-64 mm and 58mm respectively.

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**References**

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