



Attempted Cannibalism by a Matheran Leaping Frog, *Indirana leithii* (Ranixalidae)

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Cannibalism (intra-specific predation), a widespread feeding strategy of many animal species, can influence competitive interactions between individuals of the same species, as well as population dynamics, density, demographic structure, and the life cycles of these animals. Cannibalism has been reported in more than 100 species of amphibians and reptiles (Polis and Myers 1981). Anuran amphibians exhibit cannibalism in various combinations of their ontogeny, especially in adult-juvenile, but also tadpole-tadpole or tadpole-egg pairings (Grant and Halliday 2010).

Cannibalism has been reported rarely in Indian amphibians (Mohanty-Hejamadi and Dutta 1981; Rajput et al.

2011; Neelam et al. 2013; Mahapatra et al. 2017; Seshadri and Bickford 2018; Gazdar et al. 2019). Those studies documented intraspecific as well as interspecific predation in tadpole-tadpole and tadpole-egg relationships, but none documented adult-adult cannibalism.

The Matheran Leaping Frog, *Indirana leithii* (Boulenger 1888), is a terrestrial anuran known from parts of the northern Western Ghats between latitudes 16°N and 21°N in Maharashtra and Gujarat (Modak et al. 2014; Dahanukar et al. 2016). The species breeds in June–September and is frequently encountered during that period. Modak et al. (2018) studied the natural history and feeding behavior of the species



Fig. 1. Attempted cannibalism in Matheran Leaping Frogs (*Indirana leithii*). Photograph by Samruddha Patil.

but did not report cannibalism. Herein we record attempted adult-adult cannibalism by *Indirana leithii*.

We observed the encounter (Fig. 1) at 2102 h on 24 August 2019 in a damp alley adjacent to the Aman Lodge Station at the species' type locality of Matheran (19°00'04.4"N, 73°16'54.2"E). The larger individual had initiated ingestion of the smaller frog and had already swallowed its hindlimbs. During an attempt by the predator to adjust its grip, the prey escaped, but left behind its broken hindlimbs, which were duly ingested by the larger individual. The smaller individual succumbed to its wounds shortly thereafter.

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