

New frog species from Panama dyes fingers yellow

22 May 2012



This is a yellow dyer rain frog while calling, with the air sacs exposed. Credit: Andreas Hertz

A new bright yellow frog species has been found in the mountains of western Panama. The frog belongs to a species-rich group of frogs, the so called rainfrogs that lack a tadpole stage, but develop directly as little frogs inside the egg.

The [frog](#), that measures less than 2 cm, was discovered by Andreas Hertz and his colleagues, who are reptile and amphibian specialists at the Senckenberg Research Institute in Frankfurt am Main; Germany. They discovered it in 2010 during several field trips to the Serranía de Tabasará of western Panama a highly understudied part of the Panamanian central mountain range.



This is a yellow dyer rain frog, type specimen. Credit: Andreas Hertz

"Although we recognized that the male mating call of this [species](#) differs from all what we had heard before and therefore suspected it to be new, much effort was involved to finally spot it in the dense vegetation", said Hertz. "When we finally caught the first individuals by hand, we noticed that it dyes one's fingers yellow when it is handled. The scientific name (*Diasporus citrinobapheus*) of this new frog refers to this characteristic and means yellow dyer rainfrog."

To assure the validity of the frog as a new species, the biologists studied body structure, coloration, molecular genetic data, and vocalizations of a series of individuals, and compared the results with the data derived from closely related species.

Additionally, the researchers took into consideration the possibility that the yellow stain may be poisonous and performed an analysis of skin secretions. "We cannot say whether the dye is any good as a predatory defence, as we could not find any poisonous components. Maybe the colour is just easily washed out and has no particular function. However, for now, this peculiarity of the new species remains enigmatic." said Hertz.

More information: Hertz A, Hauenschild F, Lotzkat S, Köhler G (2012) A new golden frog species of the genus *Diasporus* (Amphibia, Eleutherodactylidae) from the Cordillera Central, western Panama. *ZooKeys* 196: 23-46. [doi: 10.3897/zookeys.196.2774](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.196.2774)

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