

FIG. 1. *Pristimantis simoterus* individuals (yellow arrows) from the Municipality of Villamaría, Caldas, Colombia, in the standing dead frailejón (A) and zoomed in view of the frogs inside the frailejón's nonwoody pith (B).

3900 m elev.). Three *P. simoterus* of different sizes were found in one of the dead frailejones (Fig. 1A, B). A juvenile frog was found in the other dead frailejón. On 19 March 2024, at 0945 h, during a survey in the same area where the *P. simoterus* records were made in 2023, another *P. simoterus* was found sheltered inside the stem of a standing dead frailejón (4.96838°N, 75.35515°W; WGS 84; ca. 3931 m elev.). To our knowledge, these are the first records of *P. simoterus* using cavities in the stem of standing dead *Espeletia* as daytime refugia. Nothing similar has been observed in frogs of the genus *Pristimantis* that inhabit the Colombian páramos. In those species for which natural history data are available (e.g., *P. bogotensis*, *P. curtipes*, *P. lasalleorum*, *P. nicefori*, *P. ocreatus*, *P. peraticus*, *P. repens*, *P. satagiui*, *P. simoteriscus*, and *P. thymelensis*), it has been observed that during nocturnal activity the frogs are found on the leaves of frailejones or at the base of their stems (Carvajalino-Fernández et al. 2011. *S. Am. J. Herpetol.* 6:73–78.; Duarte-Marín 2024. *Herpetol. Bull.* 170:38–41), while during daytime inactivity the frogs hide under rocks or the trunks of frailejones (Lynch 1981. *Mus. Nat. Hist. Univ. Kansas Misc. Publ.* 72:1–46; Lynch 1984. *Herpetologica* 40:234–237; Rivero 1986. *Caribb. J. Sci.* 22:107–114; Lynch 1994. *Rev. Acad. Colomb. Cienc.* 19:195–203; Lynch 1995. *J. Herpetol.* 29:513–521; Lynch et al. 1996. *op. cit.*; Navas 1996. *Oecologia* 108:617–626).

Given that in the páramo ecosystem night temperatures can be very low (<6°C) (Navas 1996, *op. cit.*; Navas 1997. *J. Therm. Biol.* 22:467–477), *P. simoterus* could be using these cavities in the standing dead frailejones exposed to the sun as microhabitats to thermoregulate through basking behavior. However, these ideas need to be examined by assessing the costs and benefits associated with daytime use by *P. simoterus* of these exposed microhabitats.

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#### *PSEUDACRIS TRISERIATA* (Western Chorus Frog). EPIBIONTS.

*Pseudacris triseriata* is a small, cold breeding hylid of eastern North America. It typically calls and breeds in small ephemeral ponds in early spring over four to five weeks and then disperses into adjacent terrestrial habitats, living under leaf litter and woody debris over the rest of their annual cycle. In 2023, we observed multiple ostracods attached to the skin of three male *P. triseriata*, two from eastern Ontario, Canada (44.216°N, 76.698°W; WGS 84) (Fig. 1A and 1B), and one male from northern Michigan, USA (45.650°N, 84.452°W; WGS 84) (Fig. 1C). Most ostracods were attached to the vocal sac, with one Ontario male having >10 ostracods on its vocal sac (Fig. 1A). All three males were calling when captured. We collected the Michigan individual for subsequent genomics work (Michigan Scientific Collector's Permit FSCP01202023161507 under animal care UACC protocol 2021-2137) and observed that a portion of the ostracod appeared to be embedded within the skin (Fig. 1D).

Ostracods are microcrustaceans (class Ostracoda) found in virtually all aquatic environments, including rivers, lakes, ponds,

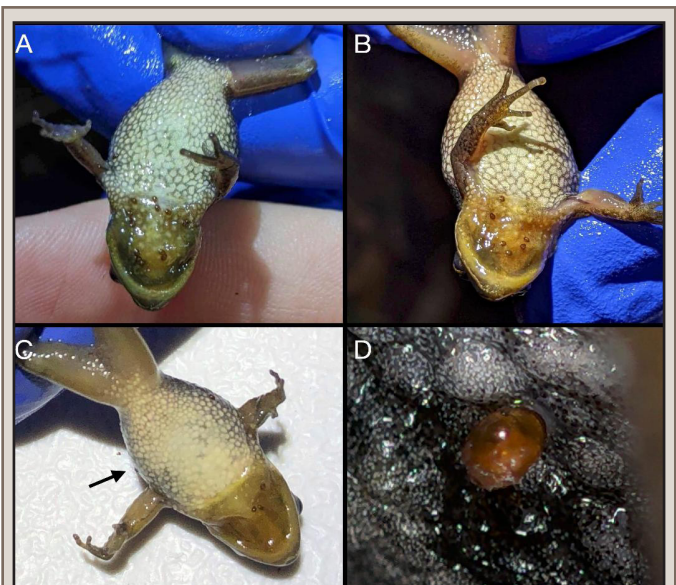


FIG. 1. Male *Pseudacris triseriata* from eastern Ontario, Canada, with ostracods on the vocal sacs (A, B). Male *P. triseriata* from northern Michigan, USA, with ostracods on the vocal sac and side of the body (C). Ostracod (black arrow) attached to the skin on the flank of the male *P. triseriata* from Michigan (D).

damp soil, leaf litter, and water-filled cavities in terrestrial plants (phytotelmata, e.g., bromeliads and pitcher plants) (Rodríguez-Lazaro and Ruiz-Muñoz 2012. *Dev. Quat. Sci.* 17:1–14). Anurans are reported to act as commensal vectors for ostracod dispersal (Sabagh et al. 2011. *Biodivers. Conserv.* 20:1837–1841; Moroti et al. 2019. *Phyllomedusa* 18:269–275). In these cases, ostracods appear to attach to various body regions at random, rather than concentrated on vocal sacs as we found in *P. triseriata* (Fig. 1). Ostracod predation on frog eggs and tadpoles has been reported (Gray et al. 2010. *Copeia* 2010:452–456; Ottonello and Romano 2010. *Aquat. Ecol.* 45:55–62), but not on adults to our knowledge. In turn, ostracods have been reported as prey for some frog species (e.g., *Telmatobius rubigo*) (Akmentins and Gastón 2020. *Amph. Rept. Cons.* 14:162–168). More studies are needed to identify the ostracod species that attach to *P. triseriata*, the fitness consequences (if any) of attachment to the skin, and how common this is in chorus frogs.

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**SPEA HAMMONDII (Western Spadefoot). PREDATION.** *Spea hammondi* is a stout nocturnal amphibian that is primarily fossorial outside of the breeding season. Its range extends from the Central Valley of California, USA, down to northern Baja California, Mexico, and it may be found in a wide variety of habitats. Habitat loss and degradation are the main causes of decline for *S. hammondi*, and in Southern California, this species has lost nearly 80% of its native habitat (Neal et al. 2020. *J. Hered.* 111:613–627). It is protected and considered a Species of Special Concern in California and is currently under review for federal protection. Known predators of *S. hammondi* include *Lithobates catesbeianus* (American Bullfrog), *Thamnophis hammondi* (Two-striped Gartersnake) and other garter snakes, and *Procyon lotor* (Raccoon) (Hayes and Warner 1985. *Herpetol. Rev.* 16:109; Ervin and Fisher 2001. *Herpetol. Rev.* 34:265–266; Feaver 1971. M.S. Thesis, Fresno State College, Fresno, California. 58 pp.; Childs 1953. *Evolution* 7:228–233.). *Spea hammondi* larvae are often consumed by *Ambystoma californiense* (California Tiger Salamander) larvae and ducks, particularly *Anas platyrhynchos* (Mallard) (Morey 2005. *In* Lannoo [ed.] *Amphibian Declines: The Conservation Status of United States Species*, pp. 514–517. University of California Press, Berkeley, California).

Since 2023, I have been monitoring mitigation ponds constructed for *S. hammondi* at the Safari Park Biodiversity Reserve in Escondido, California (33.09421°N, 116.98464°W; WGS 84). To better understand what predators may be a threat to breeding adults, egg masses, tadpoles, and metamorphs, I placed trail cameras (Browning model HP4, Birmingham, Alabama, USA) on two ponds on 14 February 2025. The cameras ran constantly through 5 June 2025 and recorded video for 30 seconds when motion was detected. A wide variety of reptiles, birds, and mammals visited the ponds. Eggs and tadpoles were never observed being consumed; however, a *Melospiza crissalis* (California Towhee) and a *Toxostoma redivivum* (California Thrasher) completely destroyed two of the *S. hammondi* egg masses and several young tadpoles while bathing in the shallow water of one pond between 15 and 18 February 2025. The only true predations captured on the trailcams involved *Mephitis mephitis* (Striped Skunk). There were nine skunks recorded on the trailcams from 25 February to 11 June 2025. Three predations

were witnessed and all involved metamorph *S. hammondi*. These predation events occurred on 21 April, 25 April, and 18 May between 2315–0308 h. All metamorphs were consumed out of the water on mud. One of the three metamorphs was dug out of the mud very quickly and consumed. Handling time from capturing to swallowing the metamorphs lasted 3–6 s. To my knowledge, this is the first time *M. mephitis* has been recorded feeding on *S. hammondi*.

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**SPEA INTERMONTANA (Great Basin Spadefoot). PREDATION.** Few observations of predation on *Spea intermontana* have been documented in the literature, and even fewer have been associated with avian predators. Inclusive of all *S. intermontana* life stages, known avian predators include *Corvus brachyrhynchos* (Common Crow; Harestad 1985. *Herpetol. Rev.* 16:24), *Athene cunicularia* (Burrowing Owl; Leupin et al. 1994. Census and life history observations of the Great Basin spadefoot toad (*Scaphiopus intermontanus*) breeding populations in the Thompson Nicol regions. Report prepared for BC Min. Environ., Lands Parks, Kamloops, British Columbia. 21 pp.), and *Egretta thula* (Snowy Egret; www.amphibiaweb.org, 6 Jun 2025). Herein, we present a predation event on *S. intermontana* by a novel avian predator.

On 16 June 2024, at 2118 h, an adult *Asio otus* (Long-eared Owl) was observed capturing, killing, and flying off with an adult *S. intermontana* (total length ca. 55 mm). The observation occurred in an area of open soil along the margins of a paved road in the Owens River watershed, Inyo County, California, USA (37.36244°N, 118.33136°W; WGS 84). Several other live adult *S. intermontana* were observed at the site of the predation. This observation represents the first record of predation on *S. intermontana* by *A. otus* and adds to the short list of known avian predators of *S. intermontana*.

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#### TESTUDINES — TURTLES

**CHELYDRA SERPENTINA (Common Snapping Turtle). OVERLAND MOVEMENT.** *Chelydra serpentina* is a highly aquatic turtle that rarely ventures into forested upland habitats (Paterson et al. 2012. *Can. J. Zool.* 90:139–149; Rowe et al. 2020. *Chelonian Conserv. Biol.* 19:22–35). While long-distance overland movements have been documented, they are unusual. However, they may be more common in the southeastern portion of the species' range. In Georgia, USA, individuals traveled up to 1700 m overland, and researchers in Florida, USA, observed *C. serpentina* traveling at least 500 m between wetlands (Aresco and Gunzburger 2007. *Southeast. Nat.* 6:435–448; Steen et al. 2010. *Georgia J. Sci.* 68:196–200). These dispersal events were associated with the seasonal drying of wetlands occupied by *C. serpentina*. Females are also known to travel away from aquatic habitats in the spring in search of nesting sites, but these movements rarely exceed 200 m (Obbard and Brooks 1980. *Herpetologica* 36:158–162; Congdon et al. 1987. *Herpetologica* 43:39–54).

On 4 September 2023 at 0900 h, AJP observed an adult *C. serpentina* of indeterminate sex (Fig. 1) while hiking along