

18. DEFENSIVE POSTURE IN *KALOULA TAPROBANICA* PARKER (MICROHYLIDAE: AMPHIBIA)¹

RUCHIRA SOMAWEERA²

¹ Accepted February 24, 2004

² Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Email: ruchira_somaweera@yahoo.com

Kaloula taprobanica Parker, 1934 is distributed from the lowland coastal areas up to some parts of the montane areas of Sri Lanka and peninsular India and occupies a wide range of habitats including forests, grasslands and several

anthropogenic habitations. It is mainly nocturnal and fossorial in habits, but diurnal and arboreal behaviour has also been observed. When encountered, it is known to show several defensive mechanisms to avoid predation.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES



Fig. 1: View of the head from front



Fig. 2: The hidden 'head' and fingers

A specimen collected from Bentota (Southern Province) on October 12, 2002 (SVL 68.7mm) displayed the following defensive posture not recorded previously. When first caught at around 1800 hours from a home garden in Bentota, it completely covered its whole upper jaw, including the eyes from its lower jaw (Fig 1), within *c.* 5 sec. Consequently it hid all fingers of the fore and hind limbs under the body into a semi-globular form (Fig 2) and remained in this posture for *c.* 3 minutes.

Other behavioural mechanisms known include exuding a sticky secretion from the paired glands on the pectoral region, which causes burning sensations that lasts for a few minutes in humans (De Silva and De Silva, 1995).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely thank Dr. Channa Bambaradeniya (World Conservation Union – SL) for commenting on the manuscript.

REFERENCES

DE SILVA, A. & P. DE SILVA (1995): Some observations on *Kaloula taprobanica* (Amphibia: Anura: Microhylidae) in Sri Lanka. *Lyriocephalus* 2 (1&2): 48-51.