On the diet of an anthropophilic population of Seychelles tree frog *Tachycnemis seychellensis* (Hyperoliidae)

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The Seychelles tree frog *Tachycnemis seychellensis* (GUNTHER, 1868) has been the subject of taxonomic and phylogenetic studies but little is know of its ecology. Reproductive biology was briefly described by NUSSBAUM (1984) and an account of foraging behaviour and home ranges has recently been published (ROCAMORA 2003). Here we present the results of dietary analysis from the population used for this latter study.

On 4th September 2003 16 faecal samples were collected from a bathroom in a house at 390m a.s.l. at Fairview, La Misère on Mahé. These were rehydrated and dissected under a stereo dissecting microscope at ×20 magnification. The results of the dissections are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Contents of Seychelles tree frog faeces

Item		**Number**		**Percentage**	
		faeces	**items**	**faeces**	**items**
Cockroach	? *Pycnoscelus indicus*	4	4	25	21
	? *Lobopterella dimidiatipes*	1	1	6	5
Moth		5	6	31	32
Bush cricket		1	1	6	5
Ant	*Technomyrmex albipes* (alate males)	1	3	6	16
Earwig	*Chelsioches morio*	2	2	13	11
Unidentified		2	>2	13	11

The most important dietary components of these small samples were moths and cockroaches (in terms of both number of individuals and of faeces). Visual observation suggests that these are the most abundant large insects to be attracted to lights, although the house had been uninhabited for two months. It is probable that the samples here represent non-selective feeding on the white interior walls of the house where these frogs used to hunt at night and where the faeces were collected. This provides some indication of a lack of selectivity in the tree frog diet. However, these samples were taken from a highly un-

natural location and may not be representative of the natural diet of Seychelles tree frog. These results also highlight the positive role of the tree frogs in helping to control insects populations around human habitations. Frogs leaving in residential areas are probably very vulnerable to poisoning through ingestion of insects contaminated by pest control treatments, that have become common in and around many houses.

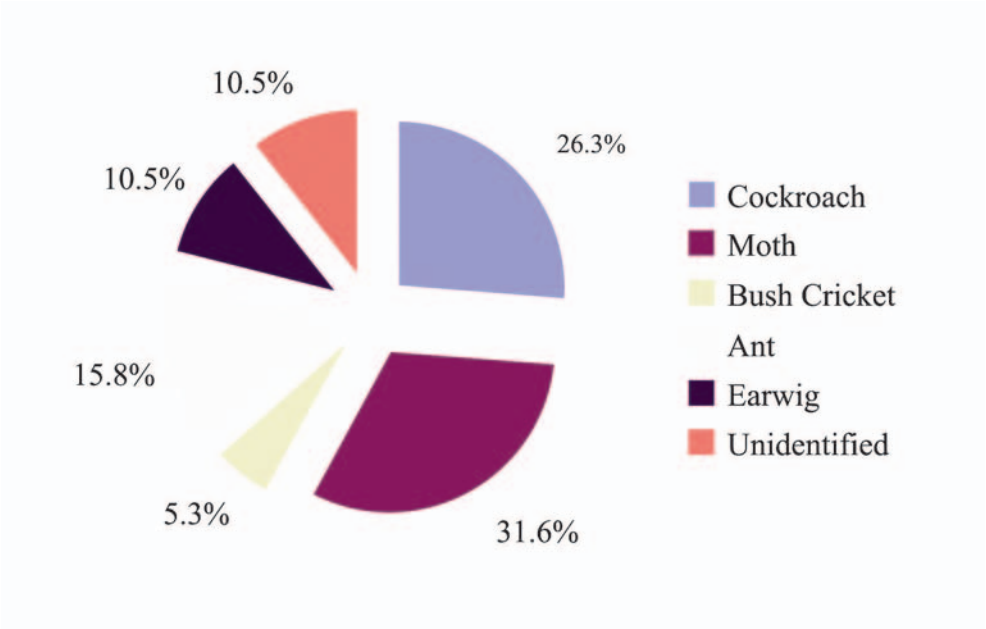

Fig. 1. Percentages of different prey items eaten by Seychelles treefrogs.

REFERENCES

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