

2005

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Recommended Citation

Caramaschi, Ulisses, Rafael O. de Sá, and W. Ronald Heyer. "Common Names for the Frog Genus *Leptodactylus* (Amphibia, Anura, Leptodactylidae)." *Herpetological Review* 36, no. 2 (2005): 119-20.

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Common Names for the Frog Genus *Leptodactylus* (Amphibia, Anura, Leptodactylidae)

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Most species of the frog genus *Leptodactylus* lack common names. Common names are those names used by different human cultures and societies for the species of animals and plants where humans and biota reside together. Often times common names are lacking for Neotropical frogs or are broad in scope. For example, indigenous people may have a single name for frogs that occur on the ground and another name for frogs that occur in shrubs and trees, even though there are many species of ground frogs called by the same name as well as for the tree frogs. Sometimes colonists have used the same names as indigenous peoples, but often colonists use different names (usually imported from their own geographic origin), as they did not understand the indigenous word or words involved. Therefore, there may be different names used by humans for the same frogs at the same places—this is particularly true when more than one language or dialect is spoken in a given geographic area.

WHY USE COMMON NAMES?

The simplest solution for what names to use for frogs would be for everyone to only use scientific names. In fact, this is the approach we have espoused and still recommend. However, it is clear that outside the systematic scientific community certain organizations only use or require common names for animals and plants; furthermore, they will continue to do so. For example, evaluation of the United States form 3-177 for importation of specimens into the US is based on common names, not scientific names, even though there is space for both kinds of names on the forms. Several ecotourism guidebooks only use common names. Many scientific journals only include common names in the titles of the articles. Common names are in use and will continue to be used.

Our purpose is to develop a standard set of common names (and their geographic synonyms) for the frog genus *Leptodactylus* for individuals who wish to use common names for *Leptodactylus* species.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COMMON NAMES

We find the literature on common names for *Leptodactylus*

species to be fragmentary, obscure, and/or inappropriate. For example, most of the names proposed by Frank and Ramus (1995) are inappropriate, inane, or both. As one example, they proposed Tropical Bullfrogs as the common name for the genus *Adenomera* and used Tropical Bullfrog in each of the common names for the recognized species in the genus. Members of the genus *Adenomera* are primarily tropical in distribution. However, none of the species is either large or has calls that sound like bulls (cattle). All but one species are less than 30 mm in snout-vent length; *Adenomera lutzi*, the largest species, only reaches 34 mm SVL. All species for which calls are known have different kinds of very short, high-pitched whistles.

The criteria we use for choosing the name to become the standard common name for each of the species of *Leptodactylus* are in priority order and are exclusive (that is if the first criterion can be used, it will be applied without consideration of the remaining criteria).

1. Any name that is in use and has been well established (i.e., most frequently used and appropriate) in publications. At times, the name that follows this criterion could be different than the name used locally.
2. The intent of the person who described the frog should be used, either explicitly or implicitly through use or translation of the scientific name.
3. Use of some distinctive aspect of the species including its distribution.

There are additional considerations for choosing among alternate names within the above criteria. These criteria are much more subjective and serve only as guidelines and can not be applied consistently.

- If a species occurs exclusively or primarily in Brazil, the Portuguese name is the name used to translate into English and Spanish. If the species occurs exclusively or primarily in Spanish-speaking countries, the Spanish name is the name used to translate into English and Portuguese.
- Common names should be distinguishable from all other common names at least in the Western Hemisphere and preferably worldwide. The proposed common name Chaco Frog for *Leptodactylus chaquensis* rather than Chaco Thin-toed Frog is preferred because the species involved has been called *Rana Chaqueña* in Argentina and will not be confused with any of the other species of frogs that occur in the Gran Chaco. On the other hand, the proposed name for the taxonomically unstable *Leptodactylus ocellatus* is Common Thin-toed Frog, rather than Common Frog, as the latter means the European *Rana temporaria* to many individuals.

HOW THE LIST OF COMMON NAMES WORKS

The list of common names is maintained on the web site <http://learning.richmond.edu/Leptodactylus>. Individuals are encouraged to participate in the process of determining the standard common names through sending comments and additions to us via the web site. We will use this information to update the site on a regular basis and acknowledge all individuals whose contributions are incorporated.

Each entry is headed by the scientific name. Only names currently recognized as valid are included. English, Portuguese, and Spanish names are listed for each species. If there is not a

currently standardized common name in use, the title "Proposed (English, Portuguese, Spanish) name" is used. Once a consensus emerges, the word "proposed" will be dropped from the title.

As we have exercised our judgment on what common names should be considered as standard names for the first list, we also invite and welcome initial discussion on whether other names are more appropriate than those we have selected.

Each entry also has a list of other names that have been used in the literature or are used regionally for the species involved. We solicit additions to these entries as we have made no effort to extensively survey the literature for common names for *Leptodactylus* and are not aware of all names in local use.

When called for, comments are included for an entry.

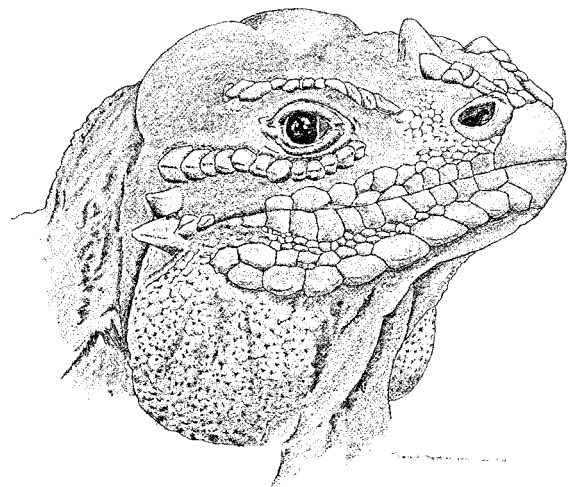
The bibliographic citations are maintained in a separate file on the web site.

THE GENUS *LEPTODACTYLUS* AS AN EXAMPLE

We find no published common name for *Leptodactylus* to be appropriate. Frank and Ramus (1995) used White-lipped Frogs as the common name for the genus. However, most species of *Leptodactylus* do not have white lips, making this name non-inclusive and misleading. Whistling Frogs is another name that has been used for the genus, but again, not all species of *Leptodactylus* have calls that sound like whistling. Fitzinger's name *Leptodactylus* is derived from the Greek words *leptos* (thin) and *daktylos* (finger or toe). This condition strictly applies to all but a few species of *Leptodactylus*. The few exceptions have small expanded disks at the tips of the toes, which are narrow or thin in comparison to most tree frog toes (e.g., Centrolenidae, Hylidae) or the expanded overall triangular disks found in most species of *Eleutherodactylus*. Therefore, we propose that the standard common name for the genus *Leptodactylus* should follow the second criterion and be known as Thin-toed Frogs.

LITERATURE CITED

- FRANK, N., AND E. RAMUS. 1995. A Complete Guide to Scientific and Common Names of Reptiles and Amphibians of the World. N G Publishing Inc., Pottsville, Pennsylvania. 377 pp.



Cyclura cornuta stejnegeri (Mona Island Iguana). Adult female, wild but with radio collar, ca. 15 yrs old. Illustration by John Bendon (Lizardwizard@btinternet.com).