

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Amphibia, Leptodactylidae, *Leptodactylus caatingae*: geographical distribution extension

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The unpredictable climate of the Caatinga and the poorly studied fauna has failed to produce sufficient information on the population status of many species. This has led to difficulties involving conservation plans for this environment (NatureServe 2004). Great areas of Caatinga have never been sampled, and new species have recently been described. The museums possess few specimens collected in this biome, which makes it difficult to analyze the biogeography of the great majority of anuran species from the Caatinga (Borges-Nojosa and Arzabe 2005).

The species *Leptodactylus caatingae* was described by Heyer and Juncá (2003) based on specimens proceeding from Juazeiro, State of Bahia (09°25'S, 40°30'W), collected by A.J. Cardoso in March 1990. This species is morphologically similar to *L. latinasus* Espada 1875, however, the respective advertisement calls are quite different (Heyer and Juncá 2003). According to these authors, *L. caatingae* is known from a few areas in northeastern Brazil, the majority located in the Caatinga Domain, States of Bahia and Pernambuco, and from a locality in the Atlantic Forest of the State of Espírito Santo.

During fieldwork carried out from January, 2003 to June, 2005, temporary ponds were visited in the Estação Experimental de São João do Cariri - EESJC (07°25'S, 36°30'W) and in the Olho D'água Farm (07°22'S, 36°31'W), both located in the municipality of São João do Cariri (07°29'34"S, 36°41'53"W), State of Paraíba, northeastern

Brazil. Individuals of *L. caatingae* (Figure 1) were found in these temporary ponds and identified based on the original description. The specimens were deposited in the Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (MNRJ40825, MNRJ40826, MNRJ40827) and in the Coleção Herpetológica do Departamento de Sistemática e Ecologia da Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB 4310 – 4314), Brazil.



Figure 1. *Leptodactylus caatingae*, MNRJ40825, at municipality of São João do Cariri, state of Paraíba, Brazil. Photo by Cláudio Sampaio.

This record for *L. caatingae* in the State of Paraíba extends the distribution of this species by 490 km northward from the type locality (Figure 2). Moreover, specimens of *L. latinasus* collected in the Bravo Farm, municipality of Cabaceiras, State of Paraíba (7°22'S, 36°15'W), located approximately 20 Km from the municipality of São João do Cariri, by Cascon (1987) (UFPB 1935), are morphologically similar to individuals collected in the present study and can probably be assigned to *L. caatingae*.

The geographic distribution of *L. caatingae* is restricted to northeastern Brazil (Heyer and Juncá 2003), more specifically to the Caatinga domain. However, due to the samples collected in the State of Espírito Santo it is likely that *L. caatingae* is distributed throughout the Caatinga and may also occur in open areas of the Atlantic Forest.

Data on the ecology and natural history of *L. caatingae* is scarce. In the studied area, individuals were observed calling from the ground

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beneath bromeliads and tree trunks, inside burrows built by the male and in cracks alongside lagoons and temporary ponds. The vocalization period was restricted to the rainy season, and occurred during four to six months of the year. The vocalization activity occurred exclusively at night, totaling ten hours, between 5:30 P.M. and 2:30 A.M. of the following day. Larval characteristics and karyotype are still unknown for this species.

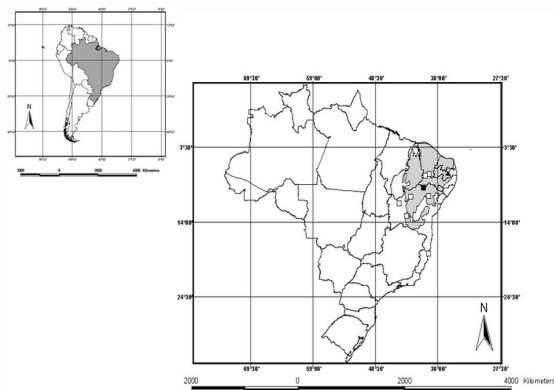


Figure 2. Map of the distribution of *Leptodactylus caatingae* indicating the localities of register of the species. The black square indicates the area where it was first registered and the triangle indicates new register in the State of Paraíba, Brazil. Other localities by white square.

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