



Additional record of Resplendent Bush Frog *Raorchestes resplendens* (Anura: Rhacophoridae) from the Western Ghats, India

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Raorchestes resplendens Biju, Souche, Dubois, Dutta & Bossuyt, is an endemic and Critically Endangered (IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group 2011) species of rhacophorid that was described in the year 2010 from Anamudi summit of Eravikulam National Park, in the Western Ghats (Biju et al. 2010). As of today, the species is known only from the type locality, the Anamudi summit, which is the highest point in the Western Ghats at an altitude of 2695m. According to Biju et al. (2010) *R. resplendens* is highly restricted in its distribution, less than 3km² around the summit of Anamudi.

On 3 May 2012, during the course of the Nilgiri Tahr *Nilgiritragus hylocrius* survey at Eravikulam National Park, we spotted and photographed one

R. resplendens from the Poovar region of Eravikulam National Park. Poovar is about 20km (on ground) north east of Anamudi summit (Images 1 & 2). The GPS location of the present sighting is 10°17'07.04"N and 77°06'10.8"E, at an altitude of 2522m. The macro habitat of the Poovar is grassland-shola forests, while the *R. resplendens* was sighted in the grassland (Image 3) and was seen within the grass clump. The nearby shola patch from the current sighting is at least 1km away.

Raorchestes resplendens is a brightly coloured frog (Images 4 & 5), with reddish-orange upper side, including the dorsal parts of limbs, fingers and toes. The groin and inner side of the thighs are black, ventral

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Image 2. The view of Anamudi peak, from the Poovar, in Eravikulam National Park



Image 3. The view of the habitat of *Raorchestes resplendens* at Poovar, Eravikulam National Park

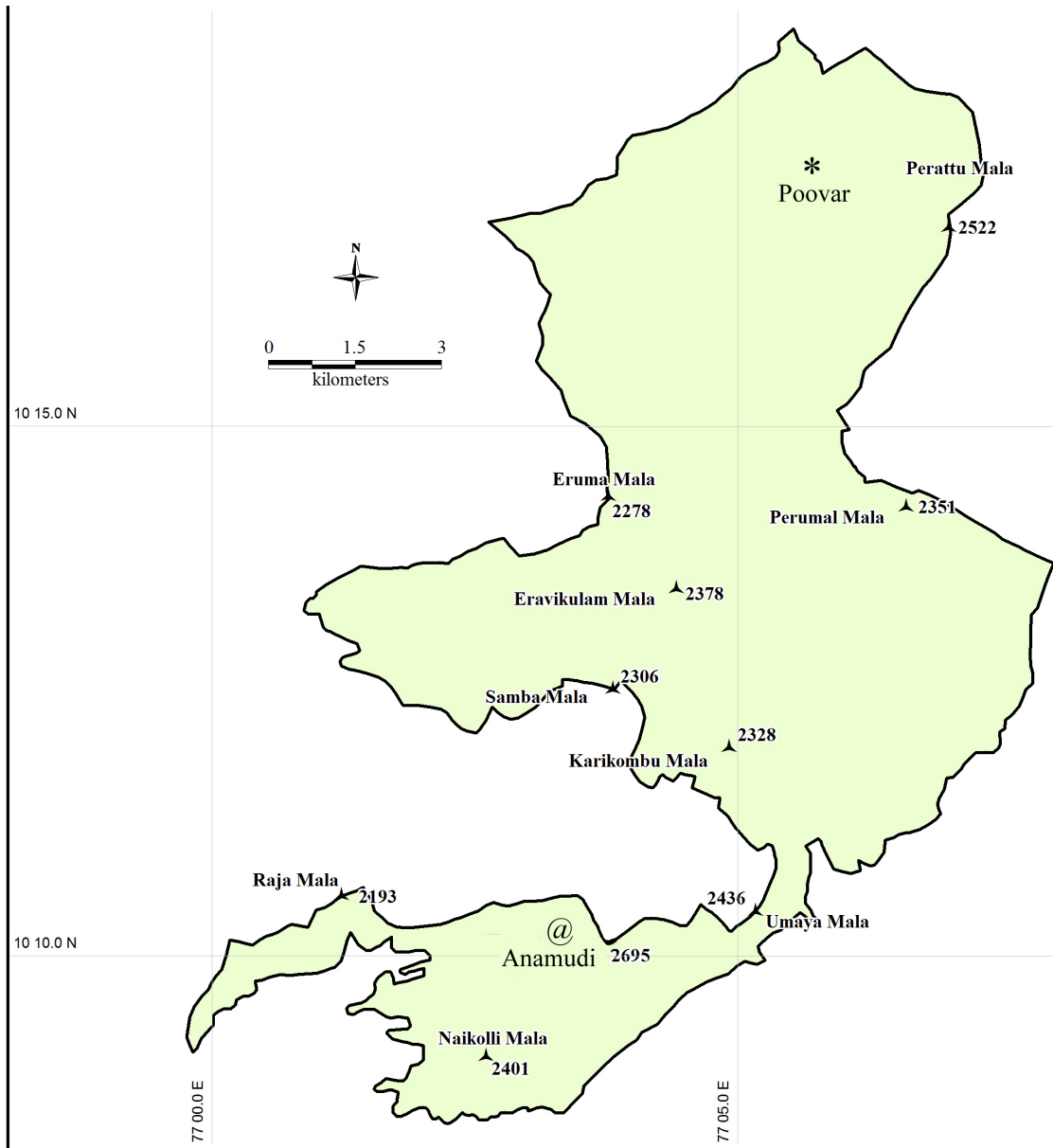


Image 1. Map of Eravikulam NP. @ is the type locality and * is the present sight location of *R. resplendens*



Images 4 and 5. *Raorchestes resplendens* at Poovar, Eravikulam National Park, May 2012

side pale yellow, with irregular oval top hexagonal granulation, and bright red iris.

Biju et al. (2010) did not sight any individual of *R. resplendens* outside the type locality. Thus, the present sighting of *R. resplendens* from Poovar region within Eravikulam National Park, ~20km north-east off the type locality, could be the first site record of the *R. resplendens* outside the type locality. It is likely that *R. resplendens* may be more widespread in the high altitude primary grasslands of Eravikulam National Park and surrounding areas of the Western Ghats, than it was earlier thought. The tiny size snout-vent length of 22.7–24.5 mm, (Biju et al. 2010), the cryptic behaviour and specialised micro-habitat requirement

such as the grassy clump among the high altitude grasslands, all put together make *R. resplendens* an elusive frog.

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