REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Attempted Predation by an Asian House Shrew, *Suncus murinus* (Linnaeus 1766), on an Indian Bullfrog, *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* (Daudin 1802), in Bangladesh

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Anurans are important ecological indicators (Hasan et al. 2014) that are prey for a wide range of animals, with mammals accounting for about 10% of anurans consumed (Toledo et al. 2007). Nevertheless, anurophagy remains under-reported in opportunistic primitive mammals. Herein we report an observation of an Asian House Shrew (*Suncus murinus*) attempting to prey on an Indian Bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*) in Bangladesh.

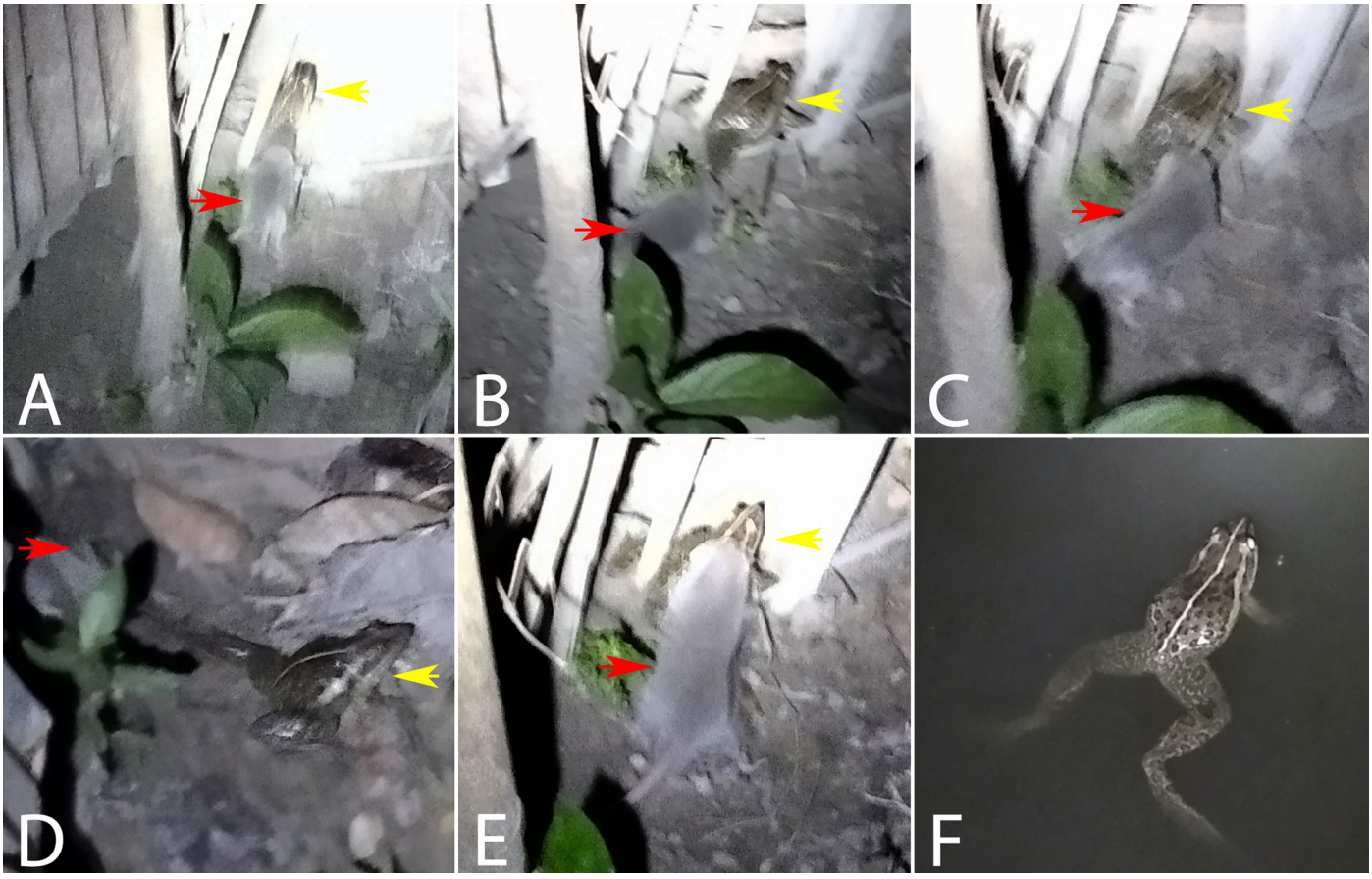

Fig. 1. Attempted predation by an Asian House Shrew (*Suncus murinus*) (red arrows) on an Indian Bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*) (yellow arrows) in Bangladesh. When initially encountered, the shrew had attacked the frog's right side (A–C); when disturbed by the flashlight, the shrew retreated before attacking the frog again by seizing its left leg (D); unable to drag the frog, the shrew attacked again from behind (E) but the injured frog escaped into a nearby pond (F). Photographs by Ripon Chandra Roy.

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The Asian House Shrew, which is distributed in a variety of habitats throughout Bangladesh (IUCN Bangladesh 2015), is an opportunistic omnivore that is known to consume grains, fruits, various invertebrates, other vertebrates, and even garbage (D'Agostino 2015; Khan 2015; Wilson and Mittermeier 2018). The Indian Bullfrog is a common dicroglossid that occurs throughout Bangladesh (Hasan et al. 2014).

At about 2000 h on 1 May 2021 in Birganj Upazila, Dinajpur District, Bangladesh (25°55'20.6616"N, 88°37'25.9356"E), we followed an unusual backyard call to an adult *Suncus murinus* that had captured an adult *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* (Fig. 1). The shrew attacked the frog from behind and injured the right side of its body, especially the right hindlimb. The frog was struggling to escape when our camera flashlight distracted the predator, which moved about one meter away from its prey before attacking the frog again. The shrew was attempting to drag the frog by its left leg but it was too large to drag, triggering another attack from behind. To avoid further disturbing the shrew, we turned off the flashlight, at which time the frog escaped from the predator into a small nearby pond.

Anurophagy on an Indian Bullfrog by an Asian House Shrew was reported recently in Nepal (Gautam and Bhattarai 2020), but the importance of equal-sized prey in the diet of the latter remains poorly understood. Gut content analysis of *Suncus murinus* indicated that arthropods constitute more than 80% of all food items (Khanam et al. 2017) but laboratory experiments by Balakrishnan (1977) suggested that it readily consumes rodents and small frogs. We suggest that shrews prey opportunistically on bullfrogs, but predation on anurans by primitive mammals clearly deserves further study.

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