



Interspecific Amplexus between Warty Treefrogs (*Trachycephalus typhonius*) and Trinidad Leaf-nesting Frogs (*Phyllomedusa trinitatis*) from the Northern Range, Trinidad

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With periods of high rainfall, the adult males of various anuran species start to initiate vocalizations in an endeavor to reproduce and defend territory; females have also been documented calling as well, but rarely (Renaud et al. 2002; Murphy et al. 2018; Sailo et al. 2022). Universally, in the anuran world, amplexus is the grasp of the male frog on females to mate and reproduce (Carvajal-Castro et al. 2020). Various methods of amplexus have been cataloged, such as inguinal, axillary, cephalic, head straddle, and independent (Willaert et al. 2016). The odd behavior of interspecific amplexus has been documented in batrachians throughout the neo-tropics and is considered sporadic in its observation

worldwide (Bedoya et al. 2014; Shahrudin, 2016; Groffen et al. 2019).

The Trinidad Leaf-nesting Frog (*Phyllomedusa trinitatis* Mertens 1926) occurs throughout the island of Trinidad at a diverse range of elevations of 50–832 m; it is also found in northern Venezuela (Murphy et al. 2018). Male Trinidad Leaf-nesting Frogs maintain territories near bodies of water with low-lying vegetation overhanging the body above water. Reproductive behavior is induced by heavy rainfall, and competition for females can be fierce (Townsend et al. 2006; Murphy et al. 2018). The Warty Tree frog, *Trachycephalus typhonius* (Linnaeus 1758), occurs throughout South America



Figure 1. A male Warty Tree Frog (*Trachycephalus typhonius*) in amplexus with a pair of Trinidad Leaf-nesting Frogs (*Phyllomedusa trinitatis*). Photograph by Zakariyya Ali.

and is widely distributed in Trinidad and Tobago (Murphy et al. 2018). This species is considered an explosive breeder, congregating in large numbers after the start of the rainy season to vocalize and find a mate (June to December) (Murphy et al. 2018). Here we present the first report of interspecific amplexus between *T. typhoni* and *P. trinitatis* from Brasso Seco, Northern Range, Trinidad (10.751912 N, 61.245330 W; elev. 140 m asl).

At around 2200 h on 3 June 2022, after it rained for the entire day, we observed, with LED headlamps, a chorus of Warty Treefrogs and Trinidad Leaf-nesting Frogs around a small pond in the forest, approximately 15 m wide and 0.5 m deep. We kept a reasonable distance from breeding groups of frogs (except for a short time to photograph the event) to avoid disturbing the amplexus. The surrounding vegetation was low-hanging coffee trees (Genus *Coffea*). We photographed several clusters of *P. trinitatis* and *T. typhoni*, ranging from one to three individuals engaged in interspecific amplexus with female *P. trinitatis*. Several males of *T. typhoni* were also engaging male *P. trinitatis* in an effort to attempt amplexus with *P. trinitatis* females (Fig. 1). Within an area of three meters squared, across the vegetation and the forest floor, three to six clusters of *P. trinitatis* and *T. typhoni* were attempting interspecific and intraspecific amplexus.

Seasonal rainfall triggers the reproductive response in tropical anurans, most often in large numbers (Murphy et al. 2018). With these immense gatherings of frogs attempting to breed, opportunities for unreported behaviors, such as this example of interspecific amplexus, may occur. To our knowl-

edge, this is the first report of interspecific amplexus between *T. typhoni* and *P. trinitatis*.

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