



Predation of an Asian Horned Frog (*Megophrys* sp.) by a Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*)

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Asian Horned Frogs (*Megophrys*, Megophryidae) inhabit diverse ecosystems across southern and southeastern Asia, including India, Bhutan, China, the Sunda Islands, and the Philippines (Frost 2025). These species, often called “litter frogs,” play crucial roles in Southeast Asia’s warm ecosystems, primarily as predators of insect pests (bin Ab Azid 2017; Samitra and Rozi 2021). Despite their resilience and adaptability (Morrison and Hero 2003), these frogs face conservation challenges, primarily due to habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic pressures (Tapley et al. 2018). The Himalayan Mountains biodiversity hotspot is home to several species that are increasingly threatened by habitat loss and climate change (Rowley et al. 2010; Shi et al. 2020; Rohman et al. 2021).

The Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*) is found predominantly in the Himalayan hill forests but isolated populations also occur in northwestern Myanmar and northern Vietnam (Madge 2020; eBird 2025). Commonly observed in sub-temperate and temperate forests, *U. flavirostris* is primarily carnivorous, feeding on invertebrates, small vertebrates, fruits, berries, and scavenging eggs and nestlings from other birds (Ganguli-Lachungpa et al. 2011; Madge 2020; Pradhan et al. 2022); it also has been recorded feeding on fish scraps at fish farms (Kasambe 2009).

At 1104 h on 28 April 2024, during the 2024 City Nature Challenge (<https://www.citynaturechallenge.org/past-results>) in the Pangthang Lingdok area, Gangtok District, Sikkim, India (27.37694, 88.57583; elev. 1,790 m asl), I observed a Yellow-billed Blue Magpie that had captured an Asian Horned Frog (*Megophrys* sp.) in temperate forest with adjacent wetlands. The frog likely was captured near the forest edge or in the wetlands before the bird flew to a tree branch with the frog in its beak (Fig. 1). It remained there for only about 20 seconds before vanishing into the dense canopy. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first record of a Yellow-billed Blue Magpie preying on an Asian Horned Frog.



Figure 1. A Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*) that had captured an Asian Horned Frog (*Megophrys* sp.) in the Himalayan foothills of Sikkim, India. Photograph by Pema Yangden Lepcha.

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