

# Seven New Species of Night Frogs Discovered in India

Feb 21, 2017 by Enrico de Lazaro

Seven new species of the genus *Nyctibatrachus* (Night frogs) have been discovered in the Western Ghats global biodiversity hotspot in India.

**SEVEN NEW NIGHT FROGS**

INDIA  
WESTERN GHATS

**FOUR** out of seven are among the **smallest** known Indian frogs

*Nyctibatrachus pulivijayani* 12.2 mm

*Nyctibatrachus manalari* 13.3 mm

*Nyctibatrachus sabarimalai* 12.3 mm

*Nyctibatrachus robinmoorei* 13.1 mm

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Seven new species of Night Frogs (Anura, Nyctibatrachidae) from the Western Ghats Biodiversity Hotspot of India, with remarkably high diversity of diminutive forms  
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Systematics Lab  
[www.frogindia.org](http://www.frogindia.org)

Seven new species of night frogs from the Western Ghats, India. Image credit: SD Biju.

The genus *Nyctibatrachus* (family Nyctibatrachidae) is endemic to the [Western Ghats](#) and represents an ancient group of frogs that diversified on the Indian landmass approximately 70–80 million years ago.

The newly discovered species, reported in the [journal PeerJ](#), are the fruit of five years of expeditions to the Western Ghats.

This amphibian hotspot has produced 28 known *Nyctibatrachus* species – and the new arrivals (*N. athirappillyensis*, *N. manalari*, *N. pulivijayani*, *N. radcliffei*, *N. robinmoorei*, *N. sabarimalai* and *N. webilla*) push that count to 35.

Four of the new species are extremely tiny in size (12.2–15.4 mm); they can comfortably sit on a coin or a thumbnail.

Unlike [other \*Nyctibatrachus\* species](#) that are predominantly stream dwelling, the new species were found under damp forest leaf litter or marsh vegetation.

“In fact, the miniature species are locally abundant and fairly common but they have probably been overlooked because of their extremely small size, secretive habitats and insect-like calls,” said co-author Dr. Sonali Garg, from the University of Delhi.

“Among the new species, six are currently known to be geographically restricted to low and mid elevation regions south of Palghat gap in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu,” the researchers said.

“And one is probably endemic to high-elevation mountain streams slightly northward of the gap in Tamil Nadu.”

“Our discovery of several new species, particularly of easily overlooked miniaturized forms, reiterates that the known amphibian diversity of the Western Ghats still remains underestimated,” they concluded.

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