



Presence of the Ornate Landfrog, *Pristimantis ornatissimus* (Despax 1911), in Colombia

Juan Carlos Luna¹ and César L. Barrio-Amorós²

¹ Fundación Proaves Colombia., Rio Negro, Antioquia, Colombia (mulaunde@yahoo.com)

² CRWild, Uvita, Costa Rica (cbarrioamoros@crwild.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5837-9381>)

Pristimantis Jiménez de la Espada 1871 is the most diverse genus of anurans, amphibians, and tetrapod vertebrates, having 591 currently recognized species (Amphibiaweb 2022). The genus is Neotropical, ranging from Honduras southwards through Mesoamerica and South America, reaching northern Argentina (Frost 2021). The country in which they are most diverse is Colombia, with 233 species (Acosta-Galvis 2022). In Colombia, the presence of the genus is widespread, except in the Goajira and the eastern Llanos. On the contrary, the genus is very well represented in the Chocó, Amazon, and especially in the Andes, where many species have continuous distributions towards Venezuela to the north (Acevedo 2014), and Ecuador to the South (Lynch and Duellman 1980; Lynch and Duellman 1997). The *Pristimantis* fauna of Ecuador is the most similar and shares a

great number of species with Colombia, as many of the habitats in the two countries are contiguous.

Pristimantis ornatissimus was originally described by Despax (1911) without a precise type locality, being only referred to “Equateur” (= Ecuador). Currently, it is well understood that the species’ distribution is restricted to northwestern Ecuador in the Carchi, Cotopaxi, Esmeraldas, Pichincha, and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas Provinces (Arteaga et al. 2013; Frenkel et al. 2022), where it inhabits rain and low cloud forests from 230 to 1,100 m asl. This species is currently considered as VU (vulnerable) by the IUCN (Coloma et al. 2004), but Endangered under the Ecuadorian Red List (Ortega-Andrade et al. 2021).

The closest report of the species to the Colombian border is 29 km south, at Rio Baboso, near Lita, Carchí (Frenkel



Fig 1. Two different individuals of *Pristimantis ornatissimus* photographed in situ and not collected, from Reserva Pangán Proaves in Municipio Barbaocoas, Corregimiento Junfín, Departamento Nariño, Colombia, 1,500 m asl. First occurrence in Colombia and highest record of the species. Both photographs were cataloged at the University of Texas at Arlington, A) UTADC 9749, B)UTADC 9750. Photos: Juan Carlos Luna.

et al. 2022), therefore, we expected to find it in Colombia. In September 2003 and on 24 June 2022, JCL found and photographed some individuals, however, they were not collected. Herein we provide two photo vouchers that were cataloged at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTADC 9749-50) from Reserva Pangán Proaves in Municipio Barbacoas, Corregimiento Junín, Departamento Nariño, Colombia (1.33508 N, 78,06458 W, 1,500 m asl) that are considered the first occurrence of the species in Colombia. Both sightings occurred in the morning, between 0700 and 0800 h at the main camp building of Fundación Proaves. The sighting in 2003 corresponded to a solitary individual, while the recent observation was apparently a pair in the same location.

The area they inhabit is protected by Fundación Proaves, meaning there should be minimal danger to populations in that location. However, it is possible that its distribution is underestimated and that it is more broadly distributed in Colombia. An assessment of the species' status in Colombia is imperative. These reports expand the distribution of *P. ornativissimus* by 64 km to the northwest and 400 m in elevation, being the highest so far reported for the species.

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