Scientists Find a New Species of Rain-pool Frog in Western Thailand

Researchers from the Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and their collaborators have recently discovered a new species of rain-pool frog from specimens collected from Ban Tha Khanun, Thong Pha Phum District, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand, and named it as *Fejervarya muangkanensis* sp. nov.

According to the American Museum of Natural History, by the end of May 2017, there are a total of 41 species of the genus *Fejervarya* (family Dicroglossidae) living on Earth. Among them, eight species can be found in Thailand.

The scientists collected five samples of the species and went through their total genomic DNA for molecular and phylogenetic analysis. They identified the new species by combing the results of both phylogenetic and morphological examinations. The substantial genetic divergence revealed by phylogenetic analysis suggested that the frogs discovered in Thong Pha Phum fall into an undescribed new species.

Their unique morphological features include slightly pointed snout, comparatively poorly developed foot webbing, comparatively small tympanum, the absence of lateral line system in adults, and so on.

The researchers also found that *F. sirindhornae* sp. nov. usually use small swamps as their natural habitats. In males, the dorsal ground color varies from brown to dark green, and transverse black bands are present on the dorsal surface of the thigh, tibia, and tarsus region. However, in females, the mid-dorsal stripe is orange, and bands run from the anterior side between the eyes to the vent and from the posterior side of the thigh to the tarsus.

The discovery of *Fejervarya muangkanensis* sp. nov. suggests that the biodiversity of Thailand is still under exploration, and enviornmental measures should be reinforced. The findings have been published in *Zoological Research*.

Dorsolateral view of female paratype KIZ 024678 of *Fejervarya muangkanensis* sp. nov. in life. (Photo: Chatmongkon Suwannapoom)

Habitat at the type locality of *Fejervarya muangkanensis* sp. nov. in Thong Pha Phum, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. (Photo: Chatmongkon Suwannapoom)