

Sphaenorhynchus lacteus (Lime Tree Frog)

Family: Hylidae (Tree Frogs)

Order: Anura (Frogs and Toads)

Class: Amphibia (Amphibians)



Fig. 1. Lime tree frog, *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus*.

[<http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/tags/sphaenorhynchus/interesting/>, downloaded 10 October 2016]

TRAITS. The lime tree frog has a body length of 25-42mm in males and 38-46mm in females. The skin is grainy on the belly and smooth above. The snout is cone-shaped when seen from above, and sharply angled when viewed sideways. The pupil is oval, with a thin dark stripe to the tip of the snout (Fig. 1). The toes are completely webbed while the fingers are about two-thirds webbed (TT herps, 2016). The lime tree frog is lime-green and the eyes are a bronze colour. When viewed from the underneath, the limbs are a bluish green (Fig. 2) (AmphibiaWeb, 2016) and the belly is white. Males have a vocal sac (Fig. 2) (Ouboter and Jairam, 2012.)

DISTRIBUTION. This species' range is very extensive. It can be found within the Orinoco basin of Venezuela and the Amazon basin of Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador, and also on Trinidad Island (IUCN, 2010).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus* inhabits freshwater wetlands, in forest edges and clearings, as well as in savanna. It is also located under the leaf litter in tropical rainforest. It has an altitudinal range of sea level to 300m asl. At night, it masses at ponds in open areas. It has been observed from flooded roadside ditches in Trinidad (IUCN, 2010). It feeds on insects (AmphibiaWeb, 2016). Their predators include spiders (Fig. 3) as well as the more usual snakes and birds (Wells, 2007).

REPRODUCTION. Males call from herbaceous vegetation, just above the surface of water (IUCN, 2010). Eggs are placed in the water or on floating leaves (Ouboter and Jairam, 2012). Their calls are sometimes prolonged throbbing notes, but mainly a series of chattering notes 0.10-0.12 seconds apart. The main frequency is 2240 Hz. *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus* tadpoles are oval with blunt snouts, dark purple with silver or gold mottling on their sides, and large eyes directed to the side with a yellow iris. Their oral disk is small. The tail has purple stripes and is rather robust (AmphibiaWeb, 2016).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. Threats to this species may be from fire, clear-cutting of forest, in some areas by water pollution, intensified agriculture or grazing, pesticides, toxins and pollutants. The species is used in the pet trade (AmphibiaWeb, 2016). *Sphaenorhynchus* is found in many protected areas, like some populations in Venezuela (IUCN, 2010).

REFERENCES

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Ouboter P. E. and Jairam R. (2012). Amphibians of Suriname, volume 1 of Fauna in Suriname. Brill..
TT Herps. (2016). Slope-headed Treefrog, *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus*. (Family Hylidae). <http://www.trinidad-tobagoherps.org/Sphaenorhynchus%20lacteus.htm>.
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Fig. 2. Male vocal sac and bluish-green colour of lime tree frog.

[<http://www.trinidad-tobagoherps.org/Sphaenorhynchus%20lacteus.htm>, downloaded 7 October 2016]



Fig. 3. Spider feeding on *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus*.

[From Fig. 14.2 of Wells, 2007]