

## Distress call of *Hypsiboas leucocheilus* (Caramaschi and Niemeyer, 2003) (Anura, Hylidae)

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**Abstract.** The distress call is characterized by loud, explosive calls emitted in response to disturbance or potential predators. Herein we describe the distress call of a female of *Hypsiboas leucocheilus* from Aripuanã, north of Mato Grosso state, Brazil. The call is emitted with the mouth open and consists of a single, not pulsed, harmonic note. This call is similar to other distress calls known for Brazilian hylids.

**Keywords.** amphibian communication, vocalization, distress call, Mato Grosso state, Brazilian Amazon.

### Introduction

Animal communication was defined by Slater (1983) as the influence that one animal exercise over another. In anurans, vocalization is the most conspicuous behavior characterizing them as mainly acoustic animals (Haddad, 1995). Acoustic and/or larval characters along with adult morphology have been used successfully to resolve taxonomic problems in anurans (see Cruz, 1990; Haddad et al., 2003). For this reason, larval, ecological, and ethological data are as important as a traditional adult morphology analysis (Brooks and McLennan, 1991).

In the behavioral repertoire of anurans, calls are used in different contexts and the same species may present different acoustic signals (Wells, 1977). The distress call is characterized by loud, explosive calls emitted in response to disturbance or potential predators

(Duellman and Trueb, 1994). The possible functions are to warn conspecifics of predator presence (Duellman and Trueb, 1994) and/or, more likely, to frighten (or surprise) auditiely oriented predators, or even, to attract a secondary predator capable of interfering in the predatory process (Hödl and Gollmann, 1986). Distress calls can be emitted with open or closed mouth (see Duellman and Trueb, 1994 for examples).

*Hypsiboas leucocheilus* (Caramaschi and Niemeyer, 2003) is a large species (57.7–67.9mm SVL in males, 71.9–81.2mm SVL in females), belonging to the *Hypsiboas albopunctatus* (Spix, 1824) species group, known only from primary forests along small streams, near tributaries of the Aripuanã, Juruena and Teles Pires rivers, in north-western Mato Grosso state, Brazil (Pansonato et al., 2011).

### Materials and Methods

We collected a female of *Hypsiboas leucocheilus* on 7 March 2008, between 21:00 h and 23:00 h, in the marginal vegetation of a rivulet in a primary ombrophilous forest, in “fazenda Maracatiá”, Aripuanã municipality (10°09'34" S, 59°28'4.50" W), Mato Grosso state, Brazil. Calls were recorded with a Panasonic RQ-L11 recorder and digitalized with sampling rate of 16.000 Hz and 16 bits resolution. The calls were analyzed with AVISOFT-SASLab Light for Windows, version 3.74. Audiospectrograms were produced according to the following parameters: FFT = 256; Frame = 100; Overlap = 75; and flap top filter. The oscillogram and power spectrum were produced in SoundRuler Version 0.9.4.1. Terminology follows Duellman and Trueb (1994). Call parameters and oscillogram shape follow Tárano

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**Table 1.** Described distress calls of Hyliidae (VC = variation coefficient).

Taxa	SVL (mm)	Note	Dominant	VC Note	VC Dominant	Reference
		duration (sec)	Frequency (kHz)	duration	Frequency (kHz)	
<i>Aplastodiscus albosignatus</i> (female)	47.9	1.11 ± 0.63	6.43 ± 0.69	931.88	931.88	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Aplastodiscus arildae</i> (male)	-	-	4.67 ± 3.09	-	151.13	Orrico et al., 2006
<i>Aplastodiscus arildae</i> (male)	39.19	0.40 ± 0.09	5.59 ± 2.43	444.44	230.04	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Aplastodiscus cochranae</i> (male)	43.5	1.52 ± 0.37	6.19 ± 0.39	410.81	1.587.18	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Aplastodiscus leucopygius</i> (male)	41.09	0.44 ± 0.17	6.00 ± 0.68	258.82	882.35	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Aplastodiscus perviridis</i> (female)	43	0.76 ± 0.55	7.02 ± 1.80	138.18	390.00	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Aplastodiscus perviridis</i> (male)	37.74	0.70 ± 0.23	4.22 ± 1.06	304.35	398.11	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Bokermannohyla circumdata</i> (female)	66.5	0.94 ± 0.32	3.97 ± 1.22	293.75	325.41	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Bokermannohyla hylax</i> (male)	58.2	1.17 ± 0.30	3.17 ± 0.99	390.00	320.20	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Bokermannohyla izecksonni</i> (male)	45	0.79 ± 0.26	3.75 ± 1.61	303.85	232.92	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Bokermannohyla luctuosa</i> (male)	49	1.01 ± 0.22	3.35 ± 0.31	459.09	1.080.65	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Dendropsophus minutus</i>	25.3	0.18	5.59	*	*	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Dendropsophus werneri</i>	17	0.037 ± 0.021	5.77 ± 0.45	176.19	1.282.22	Lingnau et al., 2004
<i>Hypsiboas albomarginatus</i> (female)	53.5	0.14 ± 0.10	1.74 ± 0.34	140.00	511.76	Figueiredo-de-Andrade et al., 2010
<i>Hypsiboas albomarginatus</i> (male)	47.6	0.39 ± 0.17	3.54 ± 2.05	229.41	172.68	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas bischoffii</i> (female)	37.14	0.29 ± 0.06	5.13 ± 2.33	483.33	220.17	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas boans</i> (male)	100	0.62 ± 0.14	0.3 – 3.0	442.86	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas boans</i> (male)	88	0.76 ± 0.21	0.4 – 2.5	361.90	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas boans</i> (male)	126	0.64 ± 0.04	0.5 – 4.0	1.600.00	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas caingua</i> (male)	32.5	0.43 ± 0.67	7.41 ± 7.49	64.18	98.93	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas caipora</i> (male)	-	0.062 – 0.640	-	*	*	Antunes et al., 2008
<i>Hypsiboas exastis</i>	-	0.51 ± 0.21	-	242.86	*	Loebmann et al., 2008
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (female)	83.3	1.83 ± 0.98	4.20 ± 0.52	186.73	807.69	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (juv)	38	0.85	-	*	*	Sazima, 1975
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (juv)	41	0.64 ± 0.36	4.37 ± 2.15	177.78	203.26	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (male)	-	0.50	-	*	*	Martins and Haddad, 1988
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (male)	-	1.00	-	*	*	Martins and Haddad, 1988
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i> (male)	92.6	0.70 ± 0.02	3.15 ± 0.72	3.500.00	437.50	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas faber</i>	100	0.7 ± 0.2	0.55 ± 0.05	350	1100	Forti and Bertoluci, 2012
<i>Hypsiboas lanciformis</i> (juv)	52	0.38 ± 0.02	-	1.900.00	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas lanciformis</i> (juv)	46	0.51 ± 0.078	-	653.85	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas lanciformis</i> (male)	73	1.09 ± 0.38	-	605.56	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas lanciformis</i> (male)	68	0.57 ± 0.18	-	316.67	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas latistriatus</i> (female)	46.47	0.57 ± 0.33	5.47 ± 1.25	172.73	437.60	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas leucocheilus</i> (female)	69.98	0.20 ± 0.03	1.31 ± 0.51	666.67	256.86	<b>Present work</b>
<i>Hypsiboas lundii</i> (female)	73	0.62 ± 0.16	4.38 ± 1.55	387.50	282.58	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas lundii</i> (juv)	43.9	0.69 ± 0.11	1.98 ± 1.71	627.27	115.79	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas lundii</i> (male)	59	1.09 ± 0.35	0.89 ± 0.10	311.43	890.00	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas pardalis</i> (male)	60.2	0.35 ± 0.16	1.14 ± 0.72	218.75	158.33	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas raniceps</i> (female)	73.05	0.37 ± 0.05	1.04 ± 0.72	740.00	144.44	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Hypsiboas raniceps</i> (male)	43	0.19 ± 0.02	-	950.00	*	Hödl and Gollmann, 1986
<i>Hypsiboas raniceps</i> (male)	67.7	0.33	0.95	*	*	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Pseudis cardosoi</i>	48	0.40 ± 0.02	4.48 ± 0.89	2.000.00	503.37	Toledo and Haddad, 2009
<i>Pseudis platensis</i>	45	0.40 ± 0.06	3.78 ± 0.60	666.67	630.00	Toledo and Haddad, 2009

(2001) and Orrico et al. (2006). Voucher specimens are deposited in Coleção Herpetológica Museu de Zoologia João Moojen, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Viçosa (MZUFV), Minas Gerais, Brazil.

We, additionally, tested the influence of body size (SVL) on the dominant frequency, and call duration for all available hylid distress calls (Table 1), using a linear regression (Toledo and Haddad, 2009). We performed the linear regression in Stata 11.1 for Mac.

## Results

When captured and handled, the female (MZUFV 8484; Fig. 1) produced a strong, explosive call that we



**Figure 1.** Adult female of *Hypsiboas leucocheilus* (MZUFV 8484) (SVL 69.98 mm).

understood as a distress call. During manipulation, it emitted the 11 calls recorded and described below.

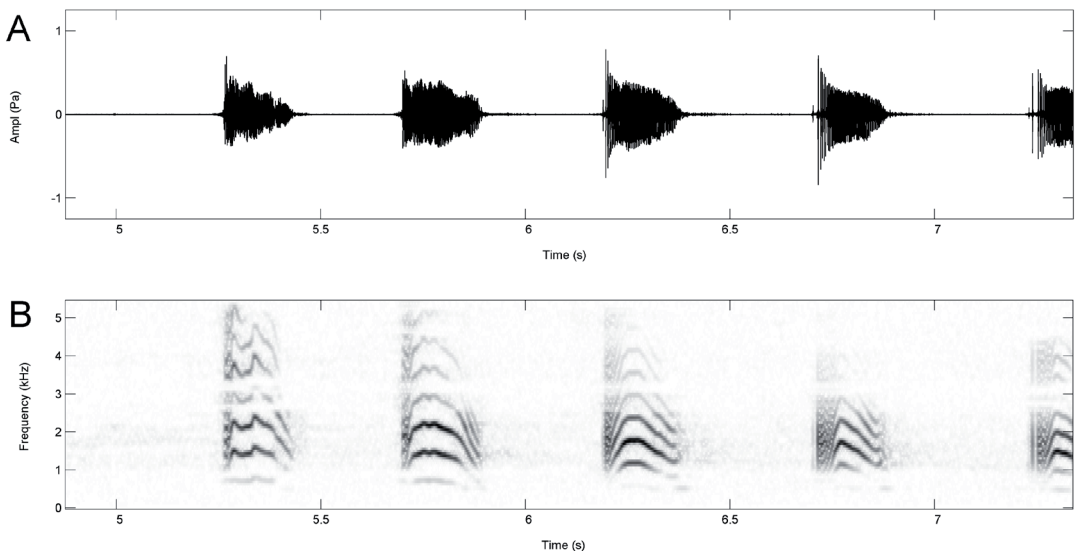
The call is composed of a single, harmonic, not pulsed note (Fig. 2 A-B) with duration of  $0.20 \pm 0.03$  s [ $0.14 - 0.26$  s] (average  $\pm$  standard deviation [amplitude]). In the oscillogram, the call is bell-shaped, slightly descending. Dominant frequency (taken in the point of maximum energy of the oscillogram) was  $1994 \pm 170$  kHz (amplitude=1718 – 2229) in the second harmonic.

## Discussion

The distress call of *H. leucocheilus* was emitted with the mouth open as noted for other distress calls described for anurans (Toledo et al., 2005), and especially for the genus *Hypsiboas* Wagler, 1830 (Martins and Haddad, 1988).

It also presented a stable and descending shape, different of the distress calls described by Lingnau et al. (2004) and Orrico et al. (2006) for *Dendropsophus werneri* (Cochran, 1952) and *Aplastodiscus arildae* (Cruz and Peixoto, 1987 “1985”), respectively. Those calls do not present a rigid form, and are altered in function of stimuli given.

Hödl and Gollman (1986) present data for *H. raniceps*, a species closely related to *H. leucocheilus*. Our results show differences in all parameters analyzed by Hödl and Gollman (1986), with marked differences in call duration and fundamental frequency ( $f_0$ ) of *H. leucocheilus* (Table 1); however, all species present a stereotyped shape of the distress call.



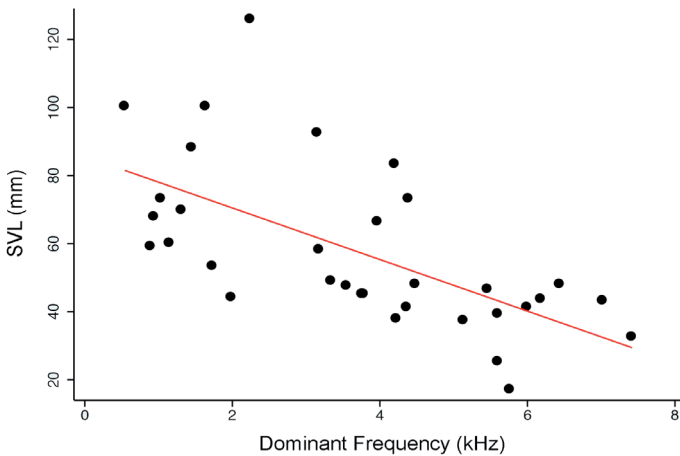
**Figure 2.** *Hypsiboas leucocheilus*: distress call (A) oscillogram and (B) audiospectrogram (air temperature = 25°C).

The differences found can be due to sexual differences since the calls analyzed by Hödl and Gollman (1986) are from males and juveniles. Literature on distress calls refers largely to males or unsexed juvenile individuals (Sazima, 1975; Hödl and Goldmann, 1986); however, female calls of any kind are rare. Since distress calls are thought to be “designed” as anti-predator strategies, they are useful to all individuals and it will be no surprise if more and more female distress calls are described in the future.

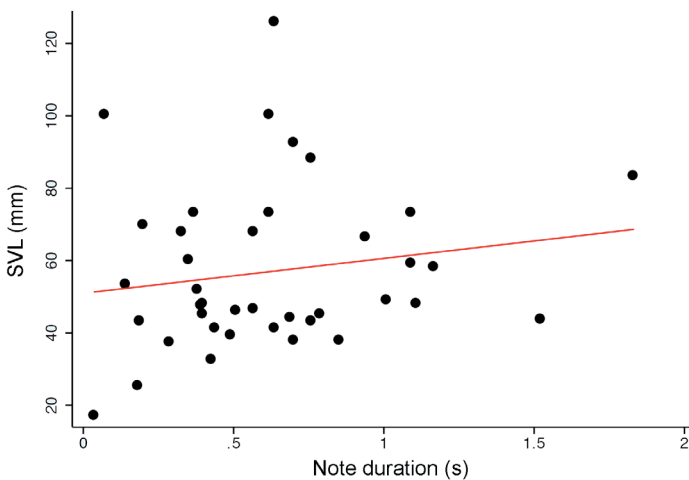
The analyzed female of *H. leucocheilus* did not present any type of associate behavior along with the distress call emission, such as death feigning or biting for example,

as mentioned by Duellman and Trueb (1994). Of the described distress calls, none has shown to be similar in numerical data to the one of *H. leucocheilus* and, as observed by Hödl and Gollman (1986), although very variable, distress calls of different species are different.

Toledo and Haddad (2009) suggest that anuran size is directly related to successful acoustic defensive strategies, since small species do not use this behavior, but larger ones do. The same authors also show that in anurans, the snout-vent-length (SVL) is positively correlated to the duration of the distress call (DC) and negatively related to dominant frequency (DF). In our linear regression we found the same result as Toledo and



**Figure 3.** Linear regression ( $r^2 = 0.3946$ ;  $P = 0.0001$ ) between snout-vent-length (SVL) and dominant frequency (kHz) in 33 hyloid frogs.



**Figure 4.** Linear regression ( $r^2 = 0.0273$ ;  $P = 0.3144$ ) between snout-vent-length (SVL) and duration of distress calls (s) in 39 hyloid frogs.

Haddad (2009) for dominant frequency ( $r^2 = 0.3946$ ;  $P = 0.0001$ ;  $N = 33$ ) (Figure 3). However, we did not find a relation for call duration ( $r^2 = 0.0273$ ;  $P = 0.3144$ ;  $N = 39$ ) (Figure 4).

To produce these results, we used the same database as Toledo and Haddad (2009), and Hödl and Gollmann (1986) for Hylidae, with the inclusion of data from a second species of *Dendropsophus* (*D. wernerii*) described by Lingnau et al. (2004), plus *Hypsiboas albomarginatus* (Figueire-de-Andrade et al., 2010), and *H. faber* (Forti and Bertoluci, 2012), not included in their work. Since the single inclusion of a small species data in the regression database caused such significant change, this call could be understood as an outlier and our results should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, it elicits the need to look for distress calls in smaller species to better understand the evolution of distress calls as an acoustic defensive strategy.

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