
NEWSLETTER OF

THE INTERNATIONAL BORNEAN FROG RACE

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Newsletter of the 9th International Bornean Frog Race Virtual 2021

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Introduction to the Newsletter

Hello Racers! It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 9th International Bornean Frog Race!

We proudly present the inaugural *Frog Race Newsletter*: expect a total of 5 issues this year, which will be available to all registered participants in an electronic form.

Since the Race begins on 1 September 2021, the first issue of the newsletter covers the all-important Rules and Regulations for participants. Dates for the release of future issues will be 8 October, 8 November, 5 December and 15 December. The contents of future issues will include notices of monthly winners and a league table of number of species found by Race participants.

Each month, the newsletter will introduce the speaker of the month, with his/her

background, fields of interest and a brief description of the talk.

We are also pleased to share exciting news from the world of frogs, and finally, there is a section on your say. So please get back to us with comments and suggestions!

If you wish to share an image, a story or an experience related to either the Race or on frogs in general, we would be happy to hear from you. And who knows, we may even publish it in our Newsletter.

The 9th IBFR

In line with the current norm of social distancing and online learning, the 3rd version of the Race has features that are not just flexible but also convenient for participants. For starters, the Race will run for 90 days from 1 September until 29 November 2021. The number of participants is no longer limited to 100 pax but has grown to thrice that number. All folks on Borneo (Sarawak, Sabah, Labuan, Brunei, and Kalimantan) can participate and take photographs of any amphibians at any time during the Race at any localities on Borneo. Images need to be uploaded to the official platform for the event.

Registered participants will enjoy monthly webinars on conservation and on amphibians by world-renowned biologists

and herpetologists and gain access to electronic frog identification resources. What is more exciting is, five winners will be announced monthly for both “Best Photos” and “Most Number of Species” categories. The winners of monthly prizes are entitled to win grand prizes and walk away with generous cash awards at the end of the Race Period.

Rules and Regulations 9IBFR

General Do's and Don'ts of the International Bornean Frog Race

Do's

Leave footprints, not litter
Bring a flashlight or a headlamp
Bring a raincoat
Bring enough drinking water

Don't s

Harm frogs or any other wildlife
Disturb vegetation and other habitats
Stray from trails
Make unnecessary noise

1. Race Duration & Place

- 1.1 The 2021 version of the International Bornean Frog Race will be held virtually over a period of 90 days, between 1 September (midnight, 12:00 AM) to 29 November 2021 (midnight, 11.59 PM) (Malaysia time: the Race Period), with a closing and prize award ceremony held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, tentatively set for 8 December 2021.
- 1.2 Participant can submit photos taken from any site on Borneo and anytime within the Race Period (1 September to 29 November 2021). Uploaded images should be of Bornean species of amphibians (members of the Class Amphibia, including frogs, toads and caecilians), either native or introduced species. All subjects must be wild specimens (no captive specimens

allowed), photographed as they are found, whether in a natural habitat or urban settings.

- 1.3 Participants are responsible for gaining permission to gain access to public or private field sites (such as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves) for activities connected to the Race, including permits, paying entrance fees, where relevant.

2. Registration & Photo Submission

- 2.1 Participants must first register using the online form at IBFR's official website (www.internationalborneanfrograce.com) to obtain official entry to the IBFR 2021. Registration may be done at any time prior to or during the Race Period.
- 2.2 The registration fee (RM 60.00 or equivalent) must be paid via IBFR's online payment system ([REGISTRATION FORM - THE 9TH IBFR 2021](https://www.internationalborneanfrograce.com/REGISTRATION-FORM-THE-9TH-IBFR-2021) (internationalborneanfrograce.com)). Payments are non-refundable.
- 2.3 Participants are required to set up an account with iNaturalist (www.inaturalist.org) (free of charge) and thereafter send their iNaturalist username to the IBFR. They will then be added to the IBFR 2021 iNaturalist Project and thereafter be qualified to submit photos. Participants who already have pre-existing iNaturalist accounts can submit their usernames with their initial registration.
- 2.4 Participants submit their photos to the Race by uploading them to iNaturalist (www.inaturalist.org/observations/upload). Once successfully uploaded, these photos will automatically be added to the IBFR competition. Photos may continually be added throughout the Race period.
- 2.5 When uploading their photos to iNaturalist, participants may wish to tag their photos with a species

identification. If they don't know the species, even educated guesses are acceptable as there is no penalty for misidentifications. Tagging with a species ID is not a requirement however, but if the participant does not want to enter a species name, then they **MUST** at least tag their photo as an "Amphibian", as otherwise it will not be included in the Race submissions. Observations submitted as "Amphibians" will later be identified by the IBFR panel or other iNaturalist users.

- 2.6 Participants are advised to submit only high quality photos where the amphibian is easily identifiable. Photos where the amphibian cannot be reliably identified will not be counted towards the **Most Number of Species** prizes (see below). Occasionally, participants may wish to submit multiple photographs of a single individual amphibian from different perspectives to help its identification features. If doing so, these photos must be uploaded simultaneously to iNaturalist, combined into a single observation.
- 2.7 Submission of excessive multiple photos of the same species of amphibian within the same month and location is discouraged, and such repeats will not be count towards any IBFR prizes.
- 2.8 All photos submitted to the IBFR must have location information indicating where the observation was made, otherwise they will not be included in the Race submissions. This can be done by uploading pre-geotagged photos (by enabling GPS capabilities on compatible cameras or phones), or by manually selecting an accurate map location when uploading the observation to iNaturalist. Due to the necessity of the IBFR judges to review precise dates and locations of Race observations, participants are requested to please not select to "**Obscure**" the location (an option

available on iNaturalist), unless their observation is of a species they believe to be under imminent threat from poachers. Note: all threatened amphibians (those listed as Endangered, etc.) automatically have their observation location obscured regardless.

3. Photo Rules

- 3.1 Submitted photos may be taken with any photographic device, including DSLR/Mirrorless SLR (or CSC), compact cameras, and mobile phones.
- 3.2 Participants should make every attempt not to disturb amphibians, such as touching, relocating, or placing strong light sources too close to the eyes of subject. Such behaviour causes stress and may damage their eyesight. Images showing stressed or manipulated frogs will not be accepted for the competition by the judges.
- 3.3 All submitted photos need to be taken strictly within the Race Period (midnight of 1 September to midnight of 29 November 2021, local time in Malaysia). Participants are advised to double check their camera date and time, to ensure that their photos are tagged with the correct date and time.
- 3.4 Participants are permitted to make certain post-processing adjustments to their photos before uploading them for the competition. These adjustments are limited to minor modifications/corrections of colour balance, contrast, brightness (including burning and dodging), cropping, sharpening, noise reduction, and removal of sensor dust spots. If requested by the Judges, participants must declare the extent of any of such adjustments that have been made from the original. Any post-processing modifications that undermine the authenticity of the photo (i.e., adjustments aiming to convey anything other than a true representation of the

scene originally captured by the camera) will result in disqualification of the image. Disallowed adjustments include: adding/removing objects, removal of highlights, debris, etc., stretching/distortion of all or part of the image, selective blurring, selective hue changes, and digitally produced composites (merging of multiple images).

- 3.5 Photographers retain copyright of their images; however, submission of photos to the Race grants the IBFR a perpetual non-exclusive license to display, reproduce, adapt, and republish the images for any purpose directly connected to the Race or future events held by the IBFR, with all such usage acknowledging the photographer's credit. Submitted images will not be distributed to any other entities, including sponsors/affiliates of the IBFR

4. Ethics and Code of Conduct

- 4.1 Rules and regulations of all protected areas (national parks, nature reserves, etc.) must be respected by all participants.
- 4.2 Responsible wildlife photographers follow a basic code of conduct – one that is shared with a large majority of professional photographers. We urge you, as a Frog Race participant, to place the well-being of amphibians foremost. Please take utmost care not to disturb the subject that you want to photograph. This will work to your advantage since the frog will likely not show signs of stress, and your photograph will exhibit the subject in its environment as it really is.
- 4.3 It is important not to handle any amphibians as the risk of spreading pathogens such as chytrid fungus may occur, which are deadly to frogs and can impact native populations.

5 Prizes

Monthly Winners September, October & November 2021)

- 5.1 Each month there will be **10** prizes awarded in two separate categories: **Best Monthly Photo** (5 prizes), and **Most Number of Species** (5 prizes). These competitions will be evaluated independently by our distinguished panel of international judges. In all cases, the decision of the judges is deemed final; except where submissions may be later disqualified if found in violation of the Race rules.
- 5.2 For both prize categories, submissions will only be counted for those photos which have been taken within Race month (September, October, or November). Closing date for these prizes is 30 September, 31 October and 29 November.
- 5.3 For the **Best Monthly Photo** prizes, judging of photos will be based on: 1) **technical quality** (focus sharpness, exposure, etc.), 2) **subject** (portrait, behaviour, etc.), 3) **composition**, 4) **creativity**, and 5) **overall impact**.
- 5.4 For the **Most Number of Species** prizes, photos will only be counted where the amphibians can be reliably identified by the judges. In cases where the species ID may be difficult to determine from a single photo, participants are advised to submit multiple photos of the same animal from different perspectives (combining these into a single observation on iNaturalist).
- 5.5 Any participant who is awarded a Most Number of Species monthly prize is still eligible to win a prize in the following month(s). However, all species that were counted towards their first prize cannot be counted again for subsequent month(s).
- 5.6 Results of the monthly prizes will be announced on 7 October, 7 November, and 4 December on IBFR's official website, Facebook and Instagram

accounts, on the IBFR 2021 iNaturalist Project page, and in the monthly newsletter.

5.7 Cash awards for all monthly prizes are RM 200 each.

Grand Prizes (December 2021)

5.8 There will be **6** Grand Prizes awarded in two different categories: **Best Photo Overall** (1st, 2nd, 3rd places), and **Most Number of Species** (1st, 2nd, 3rd places).

5.9 Judges will select the three **Best Photo Overall Grand Prize** winners from the 15 Best Photo Monthly winners. Judging will be based on the same criteria as for the monthly prizes.

5.10 For the **Most Number of Species Overall**, total amphibian species counts will be done based on the entire Race period, not as a sum of individual month totals.

5.11 Grand Prize cash awards are as follows:

Best Photo Overall
1st = RM 2,500.00
2nd = RM 1,500.00
3rd = RM 1,000.00

Most Species
1st = RM 2,500.00
2nd = RM 1,500.00
3rd = RM 1,000.00

5.12 All Grand Prizes will be announced and awarded at the IBFR closing ceremony, tentatively set for 8 December 2021.

Judging Criteria

1. Most number of amphibian species found
(The winner of this category will be the participant who photographically documents the most number of amphibian species, as determined by our panel of judges).

2. Best amphibian photo taken
(Winners will be judged according to the following criteria below. A single image entry per participants will be allowed per month).

“Best Photos” Judging Criteria

1. How technically correct is the photo? (20 marks).

Are the following the best they can be? Focus, sharpness, detail, depth of field, colour, brightness, contrast, saturation, usage of light.

2. Subject matter/ Content (20 marks)

How well does it fall within the Bornean Frog Race objectives?

3. Creativity (20 marks)

4. Composition (20 marks)

Where does our eye lead to in the photograph?

Is it creating the visual impact it should?

5. Do I like this photograph? (20 marks)

Total score: 100 marks

Meet Our Judges

Hans Hazebroek

Hans joined the Shell International Petroleum Company and was posted to Oman, Nigeria, and eventually Malaysia (Miri). While living in these countries, photography became his passion. Having fallen in love with Sarawak and its magnificent rain forest, he wrote about Sarawak's National Parks and other protected areas. His first book, National Parks of Sarawak (2000) (with co-author Abang Kashim), is a massive volume illustrated with many of his photographs and maps.



Chien C. Lee



With a background in ecology and environmental education, wildlife photographer, Chien has been based on the island of Borneo since 1996. His

primary focus is in documenting the rich flora and fauna of Southeast Asian rainforests, and his work has been widely published internationally.

Jongkar Grinang

Jongkar is a natural history photographer, and crab and fish specialist. He is now working with IBEC, UNIMAS.



Pui Yong Min



Pui is a terrestrial ecologist with Sarawak Energy, the founder, and an old-time Frog Race hand.

Cynthia Lobato

While working as a nurse in Holland, Cynthia saved money for her and Hans's first adventure trips on a small budget that included the northern Sahara and parts of the Amazon. Such trips became a passion from the 70s onwards and her interest in photography grew since.



Pearl Ee



A student of biology, Pearl has travelled around the globe to explore the wonders of the natural world. A believer in travelling light, she

specializes in capturing nature images with the phone. She hopes that her work can inspire others to pick up phone photography.

Taha Wahab

Senior Conservation Officer at Sarawak Forestry Corporation. He has done extensive research work on herpetofauna in Sarawak and his main interests are amphibians and reptiles ecology, conservation and management in Sarawak Totally Protected Areas.



Indraneil Das



Indraneil Das is a herpetologist and staff of the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, UNIMAS.

Speaker of the Month

Dr Umilaela Arifin



Umi is a Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Center of Natural History, Zoology Museum, University of Hamburg, Germany, and has conducted field work in Borneo, Sumatra and Sulawesi.

Join her webinar on 15 September 2021, 2000 hours (8pm Malaysia Time) for her presentation entitled "The Wonder of Bornean Frogs and Their Conservation Challenges".

Synopsis: Who doesn't know Borneo, the lung of the world? One of few places in the world with quite a percentage of forested areas. A home for Orangutan and many more endemics and unique diversity, including frogs. Amidst the worldwide issue on rapid deforestations, which are also taking place in Borneo, I have been fortunate enough to see extraordinary diversity in this world-third-largest island. Through this talk, I will share my experience during several expeditions in Kalimantan, the Indonesian parts of Borneo. Despite various obstacles to go places, I had the joy of witnessing fascinating diversity in their natural habitats. Among those was the rediscovery of the enigmatic Flat-headed Frogs species *Barbourula kalimantanensis*, which turned out to be the first lungless frog. Additionally, I would share my thoughts concerning the challenges to conserve this species.

Frog News Briefs

Size, microhabitat, and loss of larval feeding drive cranial diversification in frogs by Carla Bardua, Anne-Claire Fabre, Julien Clavel, Margot Bon, Kalpana Das, Edward L. Stanley, David C. Blackburn & Anjali Goswami. Published in Nature Communications volume 12, Article number: 2503 (2021)

Habitat is one of the most important factors shaping organismal morphology, but it may vary across life history stages. Ontogenetic shifts in ecology may introduce antagonistic selection that constrains adult phenotype, particularly with ecologically distinct developmental phases such as the free-living, feeding larval stage of many frogs (Lissamphibia: Anura). We test the relative influences of developmental and ecological factors on the diversification of adult skull morphology with a detailed analysis of 15 individual cranial regions across 173 anuran species, representing every extant family. Skull size, adult microhabitat, larval feeding, and ossification timing are all significant factors shaping aspects of cranial evolution in frogs, with late-ossifying elements showing the greatest disparity and fastest evolutionary rates. Size and microhabitat show the strongest effects on cranial shape, and we identify a "large size-wide skull" pattern of anuran, and possibly amphibian, evolutionary allometry. Fossorial and aquatic microhabitats occupy distinct regions of morphospace and display fast evolution and high disparity. Taxa with and without feeding larvae do not notably differ in cranial morphology. However, loss of an actively feeding larval stage is associated with higher evolutionary rates and disparity, suggesting that functional pressures experienced earlier in ontogeny significantly impact adult morphological evolution.

Ecological adaptation drives wood frog population divergence in life history traits by Emily H. Le Sage, Sarah I. Duncan, Travis Seaborn, Jennifer Cundiff, Leslie J. Rissler & Erica J. Crespi
Heredity volume 126, pages790–804 (2021)

Phenotypic variation among populations is thought to be generated from spatial heterogeneity in environments that exert selection pressures that overcome the effects of gene flow and genetic drift. Here, we tested for evidence of isolation by distance or by ecology (i.e., ecological adaptation) to generate variation in early life history traits and phenotypic plasticity among 13 wood frog populations spanning 1200 km and 7° latitude. We conducted a common garden experiment and related trait variation to an ecological gradient derived from an ecological niche model (ENM) validated to account for population density variation. Shorter larval periods, smaller body weight, and relative leg lengths were exhibited by populations with colder mean annual temperatures, greater precipitation, and less seasonality in precipitation and higher population density (high-suitability ENM values). After accounting for neutral genetic variation, the QST–FST analysis supported ecological selection as the key process generating population divergence. Further, the relationship between ecology and traits was dependent upon larval density. Specifically, high suitability/high-density populations in the northern part of the range were better at coping with greater conspecific competition, evidenced by greater post metamorphic survival and no difference in body weight when reared under stressful conditions of high larval density. Our results support that both climate and competition selection pressures drive clinal variation in larval and metamorphic traits in this species. Range-wide studies like this one are essential for accurate predictions of population’s responses to ongoing ecological change.

New Frog Stamp



The 2021 Europa stamp series is on wildlife. Åland postal authority issued a single stamp, depicting the moor frog (*Rana arvalis*). It was designed by Swedish nature artist, Bo Lundwall, who starts by studying and making sketches of the animal in question. “I spent two spring days by a lake in Tinnerö oak forest near Linköping and studied the frogs during mating season, making many sketches to have as reference. There were probably over a hundred frogs and they sounded like a chorus. But they were also incredibly shy; my slightest movement, and they hid under the water”.

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(Dr Pang Sing Tyan, Project Manager)

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