

New boulder frog discovered

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Cophixalus kulakula. Credit: Kieran Aland

(PhysOrg.com) -- Scientists have discovered two new species of boulder-dwelling frogs, hidden in remote areas of rainforest in north-east Queensland.

Dr. Conrad Hoskin, who did most of his research at The Australian National University, and Kieran Aland from the Queensland Museum, described the Kutini Boulder-frog (*Cophixalus kulakula*) and the Golden-capped Boulder-frog (*Cophixalus pakayakulangun*) in a recently published paper.

Dr. Hoskin said the [species](#) names were derived from the local Kuuku Ya'u language in consultation with the Indigenous custodians of the land where they were discovered. He said the new species were restricted to piles of massive boulders in the [rainforest](#) and they had adapted to their

rocky world.

“The frogs have long arms, long slender fingers and big triangular finger pads, which enable them to climb among the labyrinth of rocks,” he said.

“They only occur in the rocks and never in the surrounding forest and although they’re highly localized, they’re abundant where they occur. You can sit there as darkness falls and watch these amazing frogs emerge from the boulders all around you.”

The frogs were found in two different areas on the Cape York Peninsula. Dr Hoskin said that not many species were found in the boulder piles – just the boulder frogs, a few species of lizards and various insects and spiders.

“The two species eat mostly ants. They lay their eggs on land and the tadpoles develop within the egg and miniature frogs hatch out before they head off into the forest or boulders,” he said.

“Most Australian relatives of these frog species are only about two centimetres in length, but these new ones are comparatively huge at five centimeters.

“The new frogs live deep down among the boulders and only come to the surface when it rains in the summer wet season.

“To explore these remote areas for [frogs](#), we had to fly in during the wet season and hike through swamps to get to the boulder fields.

“It’s truly amazing that in this day and age you can still go out in a fairly well explored country like Australia and find species that are totally new to science.”

Provided by Australian National University

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