



Cystignathus ornatus.

Vera, pinx.

F. S. Duval, Lith. Phila.

CYSTIGNATHUS.—*Wagler.*

Genus CYSTIGNATHUS.—CHARACTERS. Tongue large, oval, rounded behind or slightly notched, or cordiform, fixed in front, and movable behind; maxillary and palatine teeth minute, latter in two groups, between or behind posterior nares; Eustachian tube very small; a sub-gular vocal vesicle communicating with the mouth on each side of the tongue; tympanum very small; fingers four, toes five, all distinct.

CYSTIGNATHUS ORNATUS.—*Holbrook.**Plate XXV.*

CHARACTERS. Head small; body rather short and thick, dove-colour above, with oblong spots of dark brown, margined with yellow; toes not palmated, and the two outer ones united only at their base.

DESCRIPTION. The head is small, with a broad, indistinct, triangular spot between the orbits, the apex of which is directed backwards. A black line extends from the snout to the orbit of the eye, including the nostrils; below this black line is a yellowish blotch, covering most of the upper jaw. The lower jaw is cinereous above and white below. The mouth is small, and the palate is armed with two groups of exceedingly minute teeth between the posterior nares.

The nostrils are placed on a slight prominence. The eyes are large and projecting, the pupil very dark, the iris of a golden colour. The tympanum is

small, very dark coloured, and placed in a dark vitta, or blotch, which extends from behind the orbit to within a short distance of the shoulder.

The body is short, of a delicate dove-colour above, with two or more oblong spots of dark brown, margined with yellow, on each side of the vertebral line; below these, and on each flank, are three smaller spots, likewise margined with bright yellow, the anterior one being the largest; these, with a smaller one above the vent, form a triangle on each flank; several bright yellow spots, also disposed in a triangular form, with the apices directed forwards, are concealed by the thighs. The inferior surface of this animal is silver-white, and except on the throat, every where granulated; about the throat are a few indistinct points of black; the anterior and middle parts of the abdomen are white, with a slight tinge; the posterior third approaches to flesh-colour.

The anterior extremities are short, dove-coloured above, with a few distinct dark bands placed transversely on the fore-arm, and a black spot at the elbow; a black line runs from the inferior and upper part of the shoulder towards the lower jaw; the fingers are four in number, distinct, nearly equal, and the thumb seems less inclined to turn backwards than usual. The posterior extremities are also rather short, dove-coloured above, with transverse bands of dark brown: on the anterior part of the thigh are several small yellow spots; on the posterior surface these spots are so numerous and so closely approximated, as to resemble at first view a yellow waving line. The whole under surface of the thighs is flesh-coloured and granulated; the inferior surface of the legs is also flesh-coloured, with a few yellow dots; the toes are five in number, not palmated, the two outer ones only are united at the base.

DIMENSIONS. Length of body from the snout to the vent, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches; of the thighs, $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch; of the leg, $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch; of the tarsus and toes, nearly $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. This animal has hitherto been found only in

South Carolina, and as yet only in one locality, about four miles from Charleston, between the Cooper and Ashley rivers, where it abounds.

HABITS. Little can be said of the habits of this animal, but that it seems to resemble very much those of the *Rana sylvatica*. I have always found it on land, and in dry places, and frequently in corn-fields after light summer showers. It is very lively and active, making immense leaps when pursued, and consequently is taken with great difficulty. An individual thrown into water floated, struggling with its limbs extended, as though altogether unacquainted with the art of swimming. I have never heard it produce any sound.

GENERAL REMARKS. The great beauty of this little animal, the number and variety of its spots and bars, leads me to give it the specific name of *ornata*. It is remarkable for having its hinder feet not palmated, the toes being very nearly, if not altogether, destitute of a connecting web; in which respect it agrees with several South American species, forming the genus *Cystignathus* of Wagler.

Schlegel* supposes this to be a young animal, and perhaps the young of the *Rana sylvatica*, which it cannot be, as one has the toes well palmated and the other has not. It is, doubtless, an adult animal, for of the many that I have seen in the last seven or eight years, I have never observed one of greater dimensions than those represented in the figure; and, besides, we have no larger frog with the toes not palmated except the *Cystignathus nigrinus*.

* Revue Zool., No. 12, 1838, p. 322.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Cystignathus ornatus – Holbrook." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 4, 103–105. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326845>.

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