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3	Multiple paternity in a viviparous toad with internal fertilisation		
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25 Abstract

26 Anurans are renowned for a high diversity of reproductive modes, but less than 1% of species 27 exhibit internal fertilisation followed by viviparity. In the live bearing West African Nimba 28 toad (Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis), females produce yolk-poor eggs and internally nourish 29 their young after fertilisation. Birth of fully developed juveniles takes place after nine 30 months. In the present study, we used genetic markers (eight microsatellite loci) to assign the 31 paternity of litters of 12 females comprising on average 9.7 juveniles. In nine out of twelve 32 families (75%) a single sire was sufficient; in three families (25%) more than one sire was 33 necessary to explain the observed genotypes in each family. These findings are backed up 34 with field observations of male resource defence (underground cavities in which mating takes 35 place) as well as coercive mating attempts, suggesting that the observed moderate level of 36 multiple paternity in a species without distinct sperm storage organs is governed by a balance 37 of female mate choice and male reproductive strategies.

38

Keywords: multiple paternity, internal fertilisation, operational sex ratio, male harassment,
Amphibia, *Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*

41

42 Introduction

It is now well established that polyandry is more common in the animal kingdom than
originally assumed (Pizzari and Wedell, 2013). For females, advantages of multiple matings
include an increased availability of ressources provided by males (Gray, 1997), enhanced
fertilisation success (Caspers et al., 2014; Plough et al., 2014), higher genetic heterogeneity
(Nichols et al., 2015; Rovelli et al., 2015) and genetic quality of offspring (Bouwman et al.,
2006; Byrne and Whiting, 2011; Johnson and Brockmann, 2013). In species with internal
fertilisation, polyandry also enables females to excert cryptic choice of fertilising males (for

50	reviews see Parker and Birkhead, 2013; Simmons, 2005). Negative effects of polyandry for
51	females can include higher predation risk (Arnqvist, 1989) and female injuries during mating
52	(Xavier, 1971), and a higher probability to suffer from sexually transmitted parasites and
53	diseases (Ashby and Gupta, 2013). Males, on the other hand, generally maximise their
54	reproductive success through rather opportunistic and sometimes coercive matings (Arnqvist,
55	1989; Arnqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2005; Sztatecsny et al., 2006). However, male mating
56	strategies that involve for example territoriality can also reduce the level of polyandry
57	through female monopolisation (e.g.: Arnqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2005).
58	Apart from differential mating strategies exhibited by each sex, levels of polyandry are also
59	governed by reproductive life histories. Among the classes of vertebrates, amphibians
60	arguably demonstrate the highest diversity of reproductive modes (Duellman and Trueb,
61	1986; Wells, 2010). Caecilians and caudates are generally characterised by internal
62	fertilisation (Wake, 1993), with sperm storage organs allowing for sperm competition and
63	multiple paternity which are possibly influenced by cryptic female choice (Caspers et al.,
64	2014; Jehle et al., 2007; Kupfer et al., 2008; Rovelli et al., 2015). In anurans, on the other
65	hand, the vast majority of species fertilise their eggs externally (Wake, 1993, 2015a).
66	Polyandry in anurans is common (for a review see Byrne and Roberts, 2012) and male mating
67	tactics such as multiple amplexi (Byrne and Roberts, 1999; Byrne and Whiting, 2011), clutch
68	piracy (Vieites et al., 2004) and possibly the release of stray sperm into aquatic environments
69	(Hase and Shimada, 2014) can lead to multiple paternity within single clutches beyond the
70	control of females.
71	Internal fertilisation is a prerequisite for viviparity through uterine egg retention until an
72	advanced developmental stage (Wake, 1993, 2015a, 2015b). However, while viviparity is
73	common in caecilians, it is only exhibited by 2.7% of caudates (Buckley, 2012; Wake, 2015a,
74	2015b). In anurans, only 0.3% of species (17 out of approximately 6600, Frost, 2015) from

75 five genera are known or assumed to be viviparous, comprising three different viviparous 76 reproductive modes (Haddad and Prado, 2005; Iskandar et al., 2014). One mode is generally 77 termed ovo-viviparous, in which yolk-rich eggs are retained in the uterus and juveniles are 78 born after metamorphosis (Haddad and Prado, 2005; Lamotte and Xavier, 1972; Wake, 79 1978). This is the viviparous reproductive mode known or assumed for 15 viviparous anuran 80 species, whereas the remaining two modes are each known from only a single anuran species. 81 The second viviparous reproductive mode is generally termed viviparous, or truly viviparous, 82 in which mothers nourish their larvae during gestation and juveniles are born after 83 metamorphosis (Haddad and Prado, 2005; Xavier, 1977, 1986). Only recently the third 84 viviparous reproductive mode was discovered: Limnonectes larvaepartus giving birth to 85 tadpoles (Iskandar et al., 2014). In comparison to oviparous species, viviparity is often more 86 costly for females, as clutch sizes are restricted by the available intra-uterine space and 87 locomotion may be reduced (Blackburn, 1999; Shine, 1987; Wourms and Lombardi, 1992). 88 Compared to egg-laying internal fertilisers, cryptic female choice should therefore pose a 89 particular advantage to viviparous species. 90 The West African Nimba toad (Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis) is the only known anuran 91 representative of the truly viviparous reproductive mode (Wake, 2015b; Wells, 2010; Xavier, 92 1986). Nimba toads mate at the end of the rainy season (September-November), before 93 moving underground until the beginning of the next rainy season in March or April (Lamotte, 94 1959). After internal fertilisation of small, yolk-poor eggs (~ 500 µm in diameter, Xavier,

95 1986), females nourish their foetuses (matrotrophy) and give birth to 4-17 fully developed

96 juveniles (pueriparity) after about 9 months (Lamotte, 1959). At a longevity of 3-5 years

97 (Castanet et al., 2000), lifetime reproductive output per female is low.

In the present paper we focus on the Nimba toad to, for the first time, elucidate patterns of

99 paternity in a viviparous anuran with internal fertilisation. More specifically, we link our

findings from genetic parentage analyses of litters derived from known females with behavioural field observations of male fighting and mating attempts. Together with presenting data on operational sex ratios, we discuss whether internal fertilisation in the Nimba toad leads to a genetic mating system which can be more controlled by females compared to the external fertilisation which is exhibited by the vast majority of anurans.

106 Materials and Methods

107 Field work

108 The study was conducted in the high altitude grasslands of the Guinean Nimba Mountains, 109 West Africa. The area is characterised by a dry season from December to March and a rainy 110 season from April to November, a seasonality which has a strong influence on Nimba toad 111 abundance and sex ratios (Lamotte, 1959). A male-biased operational sex ratio (OSR) was 112 previously hypothesised to be the main driver for anuran polyandry (Byrne and Roberts, 113 2012; Hase and Shimada, 2014; Lodé et al., 2005; Sztatecsny et al., 2006). Therefore, we 114 estimated the average OSR per calendar week within the rainy season based on annual 115 monitoring data from 2007 to 2014. We included 333 areas of 5 x 5 m in size at a search 116 effort of 90 person minutes (for more details see Hillers et al., 2008; Sandberger-Loua et al., 117 2016). Weekly OSRs were fitted to an additive generalised model using the mgcv package in 118 R (Wood, 2011).

We collected 12 gestating females in the field, and kept them singly in plastic terraria about 5 km from the capture location, feeding them with small flying insects and termites. Humidity levels were kept high through moistened polyurethane foam, and the temperature was kept at levels representing their natural environment (20-25°C). All females gave birth between three and 10 days after capture. After birth, we clipped a tip of the second toe from the mother and all offspring (following procedures described in (Grafe et al., 2011)), to store in 98% ethanol

for DNA analysis. All toads (mothers and juveniles) appeared in good condition after thisprocedure and were released where the mother had been caught.

127

128 Development of microsatellite loci for N. occidentalis

129 We used up to eight newly developed microsatellite loci to determine the number of fathers

130 in each litter. For development of a genomic library, DNA was extracted from thigh muscles

131 of six individuals using Puregene DNA Purification Kit (Gentra Systems) according to the

132 manufacturer's recommendations. GENterprise Genomics (Mainz, Germany;

133 http://genterprise.de) was contracted to develop a repeat-enriched library. Twenty-seven

134 sequences containing more than eight repeats and sufficient flanking regions were chosen to

design PCR primers using Primer3 (Rozen and Skaletsky, 2000). Eight loci proved

136 polymorphic and unambiguously scorable based on an initial test with 4 individuals and

137 subsequent characterisation based in a further 40 individuals. Microsatellite sequences were

138 deposited in Genbank.

139

140 Genotyping

141 DNA for the paternity analysis was extracted using the Roche PCR template preparation kit 142 according to the manufacturer's recommendations. PCRs were performed using a 12.5 µl 143 PCR reaction volume containing 1 × PCR-buffer, 2 mM MgCl₂, 160 μ M dNTPs, 2.5 μ M of 144 each primer (forward primer labelled with fluorescent IR-700 or IR-800 dye by Licor), 0.5 U 145 of Taq DNA polymerase (New England BioLabs) and 1 µl of 1:10 diluted template DNA. All loci were amplified on a 2720 Thermal Cycler (Applied Biosystems, version 2.09). Loci G07 146 147 and D03 were amplified using a fixed annealing temperature of 57°C, and a touchdown 148 program was applied to all other loci (Nocc4, A09, C05, C10, E06 and F03). PCR conditions 149 for the two protocols were as follows: 57°C: 3 min at 94°C, 35 cycles with 30 sec. each at

94°C, 57°C and 72°C, followed by 20 min at 72°C; touchdown: 5 min at 94°C, 10 cycles
with annealing temperature decreasing 0.5°C per cycle from 63°-57°C, with 30 sec. each at
94°C, annealing temperature and at 72°C, followed by 25 cycles with 30 sec. each at 94°C,
55°C and 72°C, followed by 7 min elongation at 72°C. Allele lengths were analysed with
SAGA^{GT} (LICOR). Primer characteristics are given in Table 1. To minimise scoring errors,
every sample was amplified at least twice for each locus.

156

157 *Paternity analyses*

158 We used two complementary approaches to estimate the minimum (GERUD) and the most 159 likely (COLONY) number of sires in each litter, respectively. In a first step, we applied the 160 maximum likelihood approach implemented in COLONY2 (Jones and Wang, 2010) 161 assuming a large error rate (10%) to identify potential genotyping errors. The following 162 specifications were used: the maternal genotype was known, no candidate fathers included, 163 we gave no known population allele frequency, we used a sib-ship size prior and two runs of 164 medium length. Individuals whose alleles were classified as typing errors (0.4% of alleles or 165 one allele in 3.4% of individuals) were genotyped a third time and in all cases the allele sizes 166 were confirmed. Final results from COLONY2 runs were subsequently derived with an 167 assumed error rate of zero (all other specifications as described above), and repeated a second 168 time with the inclusion of population-wide allele frequencies. Population-wide allele 169 frequencies were derived from a dataset from 600 adult toads (Sandberger-Loua et al., 170 unpublished). As a second approach, we applied GERUD2.0 (Jones, 2005) to estimate the minimum number of fathers to explain the observed genotypes. Because GERUD2.0 does not 171 172 allow for missing data, we had to alternatively exclude 17% of individuals or reduce the number of markers used. The statistical power was assessed by running GERUD2.0sim 173 174 (Jones, 2005) 10 times with 1000 iterations, assuming that the mother's genotype is known,

175 that one of 10 offspring is sired by a second male, and that either four or five loci are 176 available, based on the population wide allele frequencies. In all 10 runs, an additional father 177 was recognised in > 99% of iterations, demonstrating that only a subset of available loci is 178 sufficient for reliable paternity detection. We considered litters to contain multiple paternity 179 when GERUD and COLONY independently identified multiple fathers, and when the 180 number of most probable sires determined by COLONY was identical or larger than the 181 minimum number of fathers estimated by GERUD. The effective mating frequency (m_e) , a 182 quantity which takes the actual paternity of contributing males into account, was calculated as $m_e = (1/\Sigma pi^2)$, where pi is the proportion of offspring in a clutch sired by male i (Starr, 1984). 183 184

185 Results

186 The 12 Nimba toad females gave birth to an average of 9.7 young each (range: 4–16; total 116). We genotyped 5-7 loci for each individual and included 117 individuals in the paternity 187 188 analysis (12 mothers and 105 offspring, 11 young had to be discarded due to poor DNA 189 quality, Table 2). The microsatellite markers proved highly polymorphic, comprising on 190 average 14 alleles per locus (range: 7–19 alleles). All offspring could be unambiguously 191 assigned to their mothers, and in nine out of twelve families a single sire was sufficient to 192 explain the observed genotypes in each family. Three families contained multiple paternity as 193 identified by both GERUD and COLONY, with the most successful male siring between 55-194 70% of offspring (effective mating frequency, m_e : 1.72–1.98; Table 2). The same results were 195 obtained when considering population allele frequencies (data not shown). However, whereas 196 GERUD identified two fathers in all three cases, COLONY identified two families with two 197 fathers and one family with three fathers. This discrepancy in sire number is due to GERUD 198 and COLONY identifying the minimum and the most likely number of fathers, respectively.

In total, 7.6% (COLONY) and 8.6% (GERUD) of juveniles were estimated to be fathered bya secondary sire.

The operational sex ratio (OSR) significantly progressed from a female bias at the beginning of the mating season, increasing to a male bias towards the end of the mating season (GAM: estimate: 0.55, t = 10.17, p < 0.001, adjusted r^2 : 0.59, Fig1).

204

205 Discussion

206 This is the first study examining genetic paternity in an anuran with internal fertilisation, 207 demonstrating the occurrence of multiple sires at a moderate proportion of examined litters. 208 In line with a high diversity of reproductive modes, previous studies on frequencies of 209 multiple paternity in externally fertilising anurans revealed a range spanning from 0% 210 (Brown et al., 2010) to over 90% (Byrne and Whiting, 2011). For internally fertilising 211 caudates, multiple paternity was reported to range between 38% (Caspers et al., 2014) and 212 96% of clutches (Adams et al., 2005). Our results for the Nimba toad (25%) are lower than 213 those reported for caudates, and in the lower part of the anuran range. Polyandry allows for 214 fertility assurance, sperm competition, and possibly cryptic female choice (Birkhead, 1998). 215 In Nimba toads fertilisation rates have previously shown to be high (on average 90%, 216 Lamotte et al., 1964). It is currently unknown whether in Nimba toads mating with high 217 quality males results in more eggs being ovulated (as observed e.g. in carnivore mammals, 218 Larivière and Ferguson, 2003). In contrast to other bufonids, Nimba toads engage in a lumbal 219 amplexus through which males clasp females in the region of their ovaries (Xavier, 1971), 220 possibly inducing or facilitating ovulation. However, females kept without males ovulate and 221 develop a pseudo-gestation (Xavier, 1974), and atresia of follicles should occur if not all 222 mature eggs are ovulated due to missing induction, but is very rare (Xavier, 1971; Xavier et

al., 1970). Taken together, it seems likely that other factors than increased fertilisationsuccess are the main drivers for polyandry.

225 In contrast to caudates, internally fertilising anurans have no apparent sperm storage organs 226 (Wake, 2015a). In Nimba toads due to the development of a pseudo-gestation without mating 227 as well in older females (> 2 years, Xavier, 1974), inter-season sperm storage can be 228 excluded. Nevertheless, short-term sperm storage (hours to days) can still allow for sperm 229 competition and cryptic female choice (Orr and Brennan, 2015). Relative testes size is 230 generally correlated with the level of sperm competition (e.g. Dziminski et al., 2010). 231 Accounting for about 0.4% of body weight, (Gavaud, 1976; own data), Nimba toad males 232 have normal sized testes comparable to other anurans without evidence for elevated sperm 233 competition (Kusano et al., 1991). Additionally, despite a large sample size of investigated 234 females, no accumulation of sperm was found in their reproductive organs (Xavier 1971). 235 Considering that amplexus in Nimba toads can last for more than one day (Xavier, 1971), 236 cryptic female choice is only possible if spermatozoa remain viable for longer time periods 237 than mating duration. Another possibility for females to favour offspring from high quality 238 males, is to vary resource allocation. Gestating Nimba toad females secrete mucoproteins 239 from uterine epithelial cells into the uterus cavity, on which developing young are orally 240 feeding (Vilter and Lugand, 1959; Xavier, 1971, 1977). It is therefore likely difficult for 241 females to favour offspring sired by particular males. Hence, so far no indication for 242 increased sperm competition was recorded for males, nor sound indication for sperm 243 longevity or sperm storage in females, nor mechanisms enabling females to vary the provided 244 resources. Additionally, the prolonged amplexus is costly for females, as they are injured by 245 the tight grip and the nuptial spines of males (Xavier, 1971). Taken together, these 246 observations indicate that pre-mating female choice might be more important than post-247 mating (cryptic) female choice in conjunction with sperm competition.

248 In externally fertilising anurans, male display territories or defence of resources such as 249 breeding sites can facilitate female choice (Chen et al., 2011; Hudson and Fu, 2013; Lodé and 250 Lesbarrères, 2004). Our field observations suggest similar phenomena in Nimba toads. Males 251 defend entrances to underground cavities in which Nimba toads reside during the dry season and in which matings are assumed to take place (Angel and Lamotte, 1947, see Online 252 253 Resource 1 for a field observation). To enter these cavities at the end of the rainy season, 254 females have to pass the guarding males, providing them an opportunity for mating. 255 Individual males can be observed over several weeks around the same cavity entrances which 256 they defend against other males (Sandberger-Loua, personal observation). Males also engage 257 in antagonistic behaviour accompanied by calling and often physical combat (see Online 258 Resource 2). Unfortunately, we were not able to sample DNA in the field from males to test 259 the hypothesis that individuals winning combats at entrances to dormancy cavities sire the 260 majority of offspring in given litters. Nevertheless, for externally fertilising anurans, within-261 clutch multiple paternity appears to be lower for territorial species (0-29%: Brown et al., 262 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Hudson and Fu, 2013; Knopp and Merilä, 2009) compared to nonterritorial species (30 - > 90%: Byrne and Roberts, 1999; Byrne and Whiting, 2011; Hase and 263 264 Shimada, 2014; Sztatecsny et al., 2006; Vieites et al., 2004). Despite reporting on an internal 265 fertiliser, our results are in line with the proportions of polyandry reported for other anurans 266 with territorial males, suggesting that Nimba toad females may not have more control over 267 genetic sires than females of species with external fertilisation. 268 In reptiles, high levels of polyandry may mainly arise from the combination of high male benefits and low female cost from frequent mating (e.g.reviewed in Uller and Olsson, 2008). 269

270 Similarly, for several anurans, male harassment coupled with a male-biased OSR was found

to be the main driver for polyandry (Byrne and Roberts, 1999; Hase and Shimada, 2014;

272 Sztatecsny et al., 2006; Zhao et al., 2016). During the breeding season, female Nimba toads

273 are most commonly found hiding in small shelters (Sandberger-Loua, personal observation), 274 probably avoiding undesired matings and harassment by males. Additionally, possibly 275 providing females the opportunity to observe males and judge on their, or their cavity's, 276 quality. Males target both single females as well as amplected pairs for mating attempts, 277 trying to dislodge the male in the latter case (Online Resource 3). Due to the viviparous 278 reproductive mode, clutch sizes are very small and a female's value hence, presumably very 279 high. This may justify the high male effort to defend territories and harass females and the 280 taken increased predation risk due to the calling and fighting activity. Mainly cavities and to a 281 lesser extend females are defended by males, possibly indicating a high value of dormancy 282 cavities for females and multiple paternity may arise if females change dormancy sites. 283 Interestingly, females also appear to physically resist mating with specific males by 284 dislodging them from their back (Online Resource 4). In externally fertilising anurans with 285 male harassment, polyandry levels similar to Nimba toads were observed (19-30%: Lodé et 286 al., 2005; Sztatecsny et al., 2006). The level of male harassment is likely related to the OSR, 287 which becomes male-biased towards the end of the mating season. We however lack the 288 information to test the hypothesis that the documented cases of multiple paternity stem from 289 matings at the end of the reproductive period. Future studies should examine the effect of a 290 male-biased OSR, female efficiency of dislodging males and the existence of mate order 291 effects on the proportions of multiply sired clutches. Due to the internal fertilisation, 292 successfully dislodging males may give Nimba toad females more control over genetic sires 293 than females of species with external fertilisation. 294

295 Conclusion:

Representing the first study of polyandry in an anuran with internal fertilisation, we reportedmoderate proportions of multiple paternity in the viviparous Nimba toad. High levels of

298 sperm competition and cryptic female choice are unlikely for example due to the lack of 299 morphological adaptations, and male territoriality in combination with matings which are 300 costly for females. This suggests that pre-mating female choice is likely more important than 301 cryptic female choice to determine the observed genetic mating system in Nimba toads. 302 Taken together, we assume that the observed frequency of multiple paternity is caused by a 303 combination of female choice and male harassment. Because such effects can also be 304 observed in anurans with external fertilisation, they are not indicative for an increased female 305 control over paternity in Nimba toads compared to other anurans. Nevertheless, the ability for 306 Nimba toad females to physically resist male mating attempts in combination with internal 307 fertilisation may give females more control over the genetic mating system compared to the 308 majority of externally fertilising anurans.

309

310 Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study was funded by the Société des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG), but the company had no influence on study design, data collection, data analyses and interpretation, writing of the manuscript and in the decision to submit the paper for publication, thus the authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

315 All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of

animals were followed. All work complies with the guidelines for the use of live amphibians

and reptiles in research compiled by the American Society of Ichthyologists and

318 Herpetologists (ASIH), The Herpetologists' League (HL) and the Society for the Study of

319 Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR), as well as to the IUCN policy statement on research

320 involving species at risk of extinction. The Ministère de l'Enseignement Superieur et de la

321 Recherche Scientifique (MESRS) and the Direction Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique et

322 Technique (DNRST) granted research permits (N°085/DNPN/2007, N°103/DNRSIT/DN,

323	N°095/MENSRS/DNRST:	N°091/MESRS/DNRST/2009:	N°121/MESRS/DNRST/2010:
			, = . = = . = . = . = . = . = . = . = .

324 N°177/MESRS/DNRST/2011, N°027/MESRS/DNRST/2012, N°061/DNRSIT/DN and

325 N°020/MESRS/DNRSIT/2014). The authorities from the Ministère de l'Environement et du

326 Development durable, Conakry and the Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Bonn granted CITES

327 export (N°00314,N°00492) and import permits (E-3117; E-4074), respectively.

328

329 Acknowledgements

330 We thank the Société de Mines de Fer, Guinée (SMFG) for financial and logistic support. For

331 support in the field we thank M. Hirschfeld, J. Doumbia, K. Camara, F. Gbêmou, B. Pivi and

B. Doré. For helpful discussions we thank Linus Günther and Simon Ripperger. We thank

three anonymous reviewers for their comments.

334

335 Online Resources:

336 Online Resource 1: Video1.avi, defending cavity entrance: shows a behavioural observation

337 of a male defending a cavity entrance against another male.

338 Online Resource 2: Video2.avi, antagonistic behaviours: shows behavioural observations of

339 male antagonistic behaviours as aggressive calling and fighting.

340 Online Resource 3: Video3.avi: male harassment: shows a male harassing a female, as well as

a male trying to dislodge an amplected male.

342 Online Resource 4: Video4.avi: female dislodges male: gives an example of a female

343 dislodging an amplected male from her back.

344

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514 Figure caption

515 Fig 1 Operational sex ratio for Nimba toads within the rainy season. Shown is the average 516 operation sex ratio (OSR) per calendar week, based on annual monitoring data in those areas 517 where females for this study were captured; data recorded between 2007 and 2014 (based on 518 333 squares (5x5m) examined for Nimba toads). The mating season is indicated in grey. The 519 line shows the predictions of the OSR of an additive generalised model. The horizontal line 520 indicates and equal OSR. The inset figure in the upper left shows a brightly coloured male, 521 the inset in the lower right a pair in amplexus. The graphic was produced in R, the inset 522 photographs added in Illustrator.