

FIELD NOTES

cit.). Determining if a reproducing population of Barking Treefrogs exists at this site is warranted.

This is the first documented occurrence of this species in Nottoway County and the third occurrence in the Piedmont region of Virginia. Digital photos of the first two specimens were deposited in the VHS archives (vouchers #109 and 109b). No photograph exists of the third specimen, but it was confirmed and released at the point of capture by J.D. Kleopfer.

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Rana sylvatica (Wood Frog). VA: Fairfax Co., Great Falls Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway (38° 59' 15.46" N, 77° 15' 06.27" W). 10 March 2007. Brent W. Steury and Kevin Butler.

On 10 March 2007, two of us (BWS and KB) observed mating behavior and amplexus of several male Wood Frogs (*Rana sylvatica*) with an adult female Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) in a small pool in a Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) seepage swamp in Great Falls Park, a section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Fairfax County, Virginia. A loud chorus of Wood Frogs emanated from the swamp and at least 12 were observed in the pool along with a single female Spotted Salamander. At least five *R. sylvatica* attempted to mate with the salamander (Fig. 1) and two engaged in amplexus at the exclusion of other interested competitors over the course of 30 min of observation. The salamander appeared helpless to fend off her suitors, and moved less than 0.1 m during the observation. Two other mating groups were evident farther out in the pool, but we could not determine whether a salamander was present in these groups.

Males of species with explosive mating aggregations and scramble competition like *R. sylvatica* apparently have trouble distinguishing gender and species of other individuals visually (Wells. 2007. The Ecology and Behavior of Amphibians. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL. 1,148 pp.). Male Wood Frogs are well known to amplex with females of other species of frogs and even inanimate objects during the period of heightened hormonal activity during the breeding season, probably because of this visual challenge (Davis and Folkerts. 1986. Life history of the Wood Frog, *Rana sylvatica* LeConte (Amphibia: Ranidae) in Alabama. Brimleyana 12: 29-50; JCM, pers. obs., P. deMaynadier,

J. Petranka, and S. Roble, pers. comm.). Amplexus with other species has been reported, for example, in Boreal Toads (*Bufo boreas*) (Marco et al. 1998. Sex recognition and mate choice by male Western Toads, *Bufo boreas*. Animal Behavior 55: 1631-1635) and Cope's Gray Treefrogs (*Hyla chrysoscelis*) (Byrd. 2007. The last kids in the wetland. Tennessee Herpetological Society Newsletter 3: 6-7). Although unusual, amplexus of *R. sylvatica* with *A. maculatum* is yet another outcome of the mating frenzy characteristic of explosive breeding anurans. Although amplexus with Spotted Salamanders has also been observed in Maine (A. Calhoun, pers. comm.) and New York (A. Breisch, pers. comm.), we believe this is the first published observation.



Fig. 1. Several males of *Rana sylvatica* in amplexus with a female *Ambystoma maculatum* in Great Falls Park, Fairfax County, VA.

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