

RANA AURORA DRAYTONII (California red-legged frog).
PREDATION. Herein we report on predation of California Red-legged Frogs observed during the course of a radio-telemetry study at Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, California, USA.

Rana aurora draytonii is federally listed as a threatened species; hence, there is considerable interest in learning more about its ecology and life history. During January 2000, we had 19 *R. aurora* outfitted with radiotransmitters (Rathbun and Murphey 1996. Herpetol. Review. 27:187-189). Two of these frogs were captured at a breeding pond on 12 Jan 2000, fitted with a transmitter, PIT tagged, and released at the capture site. On 14 Jan, both frogs were still present in the pond. On 18 Jan, we attempted to relocate the frogs and found that the signal was originating 400 m north of the pond, along a small, unnamed tributary to Olema Creek. As we approached the creek, a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) took flight. We noticed that the transmitter signal immediately changed, and after switching the receiver to the second frequency, confirmed that both transmitters were inside the heron.

The transmitters continued to function, and we were able to radio-track the heron for three days. During that time, the heron spent most of its time within 2 km of the breeding pond. On 24 Jan, we recovered both transmitters in a California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) thicket below a dead red alder (*Alnus rubra*) snag along Olema Creek, 1200 m from the pond.

The *R. aurora* were both adult males (6.5 cm SVL and 33.7 g; 7.4 cm SVL and 41.7 g). Because we did not observe the predation event, it is not possible to determine the time of day that the frogs were eaten. Normally, *R. aurora* are nocturnal, but it is not unusual to find a few *R. aurora* floating at the water surface or sitting on the bank during the middle of the day (pers. obs.).

There are no published reports of herons or other waterbirds feeding on adult red-legged frogs. The Recovery Plan for the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2002. Portland, Oregon) discusses predation, but it focuses on non-native predators such as fish and bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*). The plan mentions Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), Great Blue Herons, American Bitterns (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*), and garter snakes (*Thamnophis* spp.) as predators on adult *R. aurora*, but only the hawk predation is supported by a published report (Rathbun and Murphey, *op. cit.*).

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