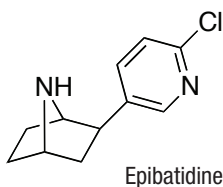
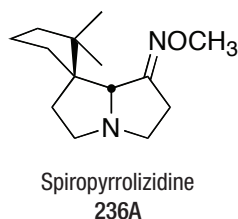
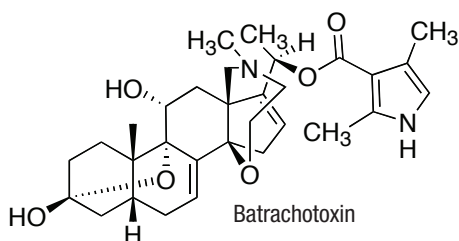


# Aposematic Poison Frogs (Dendrobatidae) of the Andean Countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela



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## La Planada Poison Frog

*Ameerega andina* (Myers and Burrowes, 1987)

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### Names

La Planada Poison Frog (Frank and Ramus, 1995); *Rana Venenosa de La Planada*. The specific epithet *andina* is a new Latin adjective and makes reference to the Andes mountains (Myers and Burrowes, 1987). The vernacular name La Planada Poison Frog refers to the type locality, *Reserva Natural La Planada*, Colombia.

### Taxonomic Comments

This species was first placed in the genus *Dendrobates* Wagler, 1830 (Myers and Burrowes, 1987). Later, Bauer (1994) placed it in his newly proposed genus *Paruurobates*. Grant *et al.* (2006) moved this species to *Ameerega* Bauer, 1986. *Ameerega andina* is one of the two *trans*-Andean members of this genus found on the western versant of the Andes; the other is *A. erythromos* (see Grant *et al.*, 2006). However, neither of these species have been included in molecular genetic analyses and their inclusion in *Ameerega* should be considered provisional. This is particularly so for *A. andina*. Its placement in *Ameerega* is based in part on having a first finger that is shorter than the second—a character typical of most Dendrobatinae (excluding *Phyllobates*). All other *Ameerega*, including *A. erythromos*, have first fingers that are longer than the second (J.L. Brown, pers. comm.).

### Identification and Description

*Ameerega andina* is a small dendrobatid, with a snout-vent length (SVL) of 19.5–20.1 mm in males and 20.7–21.5 mm in females. The first finger is slightly shorter than the second; the dorsal and ventral skin is smooth or barely granular. The coloration of the dorsum is dark brown or black with a pair of greenish-yellow longitudinal, dorsolateral stripes; the limbs have bluish-green spots or speckling. Flash marks are present on the upper forearms and at the groin. The ventral surfaces are blackish-brown under the throat, mottled dark brown and bluish to yellow on the venter. The undersides of the forearms and hind limbs are yellow. Vocal slits are present in males (Myers and Burrowes, 1987).



## Identification and Description of Larvae and Froglets

Unknown.

### Similar Species

There are no other species in the range of *Ameerega andina* with which it can be confused. In Colombia, *Phyllobates aurotaenia* and *Dendrobates truncatus* are the only species that have yellow-green longitudinal, dorsolateral stripes. Both can be distinguished from *A. andina* based on hand structure. *Phyllobates aurotaenia* has reduced finger discs (vs. moderately expanded in *A. andina*) and the length of the first finger (adpressed) is considerably longer than the second (vs. shorter in *A. andina*). *Dendrobates truncatus* has largely expanded finger discs, >1.5 finger-width below disk (vs. moderately expanded, <1.5 finger-width below disk in *A. andina*) and limbs that are usually striped or banded (vs. irregularly spotted).

### Alkaloid Profile

Unknown.

### Natural History and Ecology

*Ameerega andina* is diurnal, terrestrial and also semiarboreal. It has been observed near water-filled bromeliads in trees and near fallen tree branches. Myers and Burrowes (1987) considered this species to be scansorial, but predominantly arboreal. Their observations may be attributed to the arboreal distribution of its reproductive resources (water-filled bromeliads).

### Calls and Vocalizations

Males of *A. andina* call from bromeliads, and advertisement calls have been described as a series of well-spaced "creeeek" vocalizations (Myers and Burrowes, 1987).

### Reproduction

*Ameerega andina* uses cephalic amplexus during reproduction (Myers and Burrowes, 1987; Grant *et al.*, 2006) and is believed to exhibit male parental care, where males attend egg clutches and, once larvae hatch, transport the larvae to pools of water (usually in a bromeliad in a tree or shrub). Field observations suggest that males of *A. andina* have a high degree of site fidelity, likely based on the distribution of reproductive resources (Myers and Burrowes, 1987). Courtship appears to be initiated by a calling male from a bromeliad or similar elevated perch. In the one documented observation of breeding, the female approached the calling male and turned away. The male then mounted the female, wrapping his forelimbs around the head and allowing his hind limbs to hang loose (this is typical for species that engage in cephalic amplexus). The pair remained coupled for an extended period (45 minutes) and periodically the female rose and hopped a short distance, changing their orientation. Egg laying and fertilization has never been observed in this species.



Clutches of 3–4 dark-colored eggs have been found in bromeliads just above the water line (Myers and Burrowes, 1987).

## Distribution

This species is endemic to Colombia. La Planada's Poison Frog is found only in the vicinity of the type locality in the *Reserva Natural La Planada* in the municipality of Altaquer and Ricuarte, Department of Nariño, Colombia. This poison frog is restricted to the southwest and the Pacific Andean versant, at elevations of 1700–2020 meters (Myers and Burrowes, 1987; Frost, 2016).

## Threats

*Ameerega andina* does not appear to be common and is only known from a very small range. There is very little information on threats to this species. Threats potentially include deforestation, due to expanding agriculture, and illegal logging.

## Conservation Status

Classified as Data Deficient (DD) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (version 2011.2) due to uncertainty about its Extent of Occurrence (EOO) and ecological requirements. It occurs in the protected area of *Reserva Natural La Planada*. Decree INDERENA No. 39 of 9 July, 1985, forbids the collection of *Ameerega* spp. for commercial (or other) purposes. This poison frog is listed in Appendix II of CITES.

*Ameerega andina*

Morph



— = 5 mm





*Ameerega andina*

## Map

