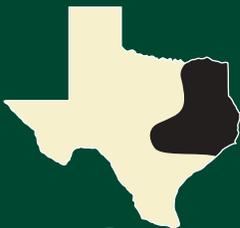


Bronze Frog

Rana clamitans clamitans



PHOTO BY TERRY HIBBITTS



Named for its body color, the bronze frog is a secretive species, hiding under vegetation near ponds, creeks and rivers. It may be difficult to find until warm, humid evenings when its mating call is heard.

Northern Pineywoods

Bronze Frog

Rana clamitans clamitans



APPEARANCE

Length: 2 to 4 inches (5.4 to 10.2 cm)

Distinguishing Characteristics

- Bronze to brownish body
- White belly with dark, irregular blotches
- Bright green upper lip and nose
- Males may have yellowish throats.
- Smooth skinned, like all true frogs
- Long hind legs with webbed toes
- Fold of skin, called a lateral line, begins behind the eye runs two-thirds the length of body.
- *Tympanum* (ear disc) is larger in males.

LIFE HISTORY

Range: Southeastern portion of the United States, from North Carolina to the eastern third of Texas

Diet: Small frogs, worms, insects, and other small invertebrates

Predators: Birds, fish and small *carnivores* (meat eaters)

Sexual maturity: First full summer after metamorphosis

Breeding season: Early spring through summer

Eggs: 2,000 to 4,000 eggs in small masses attached to underwater vegetation. Eggs are 1.5 mm when laid, but grow to 6 mm as cells divide.

Incubation: 1 to 2 weeks

Young: Tadpoles are green with small, dark spots. They grow 1 to 1.5 inches (28 to 33 mm) before they *metamorphose* (change from tadpoles to frogs).

Life span: 7 to 10 years

HABITAT

Bronze frogs prefer shallow streams, ponds, marshes, springs, and swamps with plenty of vegetation.

BEHAVIOR

Bronze frogs are nocturnal and solitary. They remain under cover, in logs and crevices, most of the time. Male bronze frogs court females with a distinct call. Researchers agree that the love song of the bronze frog sounds like someone plucking a loose banjo string. In fact, another common name for the bronze frog is the "banjo frog."

NOW YOU KNOW!

- *Rana* is the Latin word for "frog." *Clamitans*, the species and subspecies name, means "noisy" and refers to the call of the male.
- The bronze frog is a member of the true frog family, the Ranidae family.
- The moist, permeable skin of the bronze frog (like other frog species) makes it very sensitive to pollution, a good indicator of water quality for people.

BRONZE FROGS AND PEOPLE

There is concern about the decline in amphibian populations worldwide, although there is not enough information about most amphibians (bronze frogs included) in Texas to determine whether there is cause for concern here. Worldwide, scientists are investigating a number of possible causes for amphibian decline: acid rain, herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers, industrial waste, habitat destruction, introduced species, bacteria, ozone depletion and global warming. It could be a combination of any or several of these suspected causes. In Texas, citizens can join Texas Amphibian Watch to help scientists keep an eye on the health of Texas amphibian populations.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature or call 512-912-7011