

## AMPHIBIANS

### **Green Frog *Rana clamitans***

Ecology: The green frog is large with adults ranging in size from two to four inches in length. Life span in the wild is unknown, but captive frogs have been known to live up to ten years. Males and females are phenotypically different. Males have a tympanum that is larger than their eyes and a yellow throat. Females have a tympanum that is the same size as their eyes and a white throat. Both sexes have prominent dorsolateral ridges and dark, transverse bands on their legs and webbed toes. The first fingers do not extend past the second. There are various color phases including bronze, brown, light green and in very rare cases, blue (Gilliland 2000).

Green frogs are both diurnal and nocturnal, living in and around shallow water. They will enter dormancy during colder months. Green Frogs are a solitary species except during breeding season when they congregate at breeding locations (Wikipedia 2008). Males guard their breeding territory, which is approximately one to six meters in diameter, and sing to attract females (Gilliland 2000). These frogs also have excellent vision, used to locate prey. Green frogs are opportunistic carnivores and employ the sit-and-wait hunting tactic to capture their prey, which includes insects, worms and fish (Barry and Lockard 2003; Gilliland 2000).

Breeding takes place in late spring and summer (Stebbins 2003), and lasts between one to three months. Each female produces 1,000 – 7,000 eggs (Wikipedia 2008). These eggs are attached to emergent aquatic vegetation or they float on the surface of the water. Gestation takes three to five days. After hatching the tadpoles usually overwinter during their first year and then transform the following summer (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 2008).

Distribution: Green frogs are native to the eastern United States (Hammerson 2004; Stebbins 2003). They are currently found along the northern Wasatch front in the following Utah counties: Rich, Morgan and Summit (Pers. Comm. 2008. Craig Schaugaard, Northern Region Aquatic Manager, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources); along with Wasatch and Utah (Pers. Comm. 2008. Don Willey, Central Region Aquatic Manager, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 2005).

Pathways of Introduction: While native to the eastern United States, they were likely introduced to the West, including Utah, through the pet trade. As their populations grow, they will continue to spread throughout Utah and the West (Pers. Comm. 2008. Krissy Wilson, Native Aquatics Coordinator, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources).

Management Concerns: The green frog poses a threat to native species. They compete for food and other resources with native amphibians, including the threatened Boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*). Natural predators to these frogs include native birds and snakes. Currently, there are no management efforts in Utah that specifically target the green frog

(Pers. Comm. 2008. Krissy Wilson, Native Aquatics Coordinator, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources).

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