

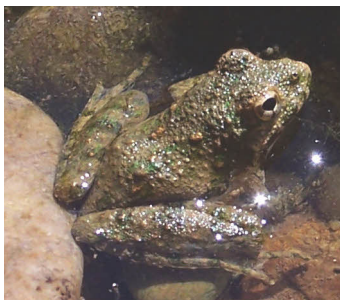
# Going Green



The term “Going Green” has been used a lot in past few years. There is no better way to “Go Green” than to use native frogs and toads. They are nature’s answer to any insect problem.

Their call can be as loud as 115db! They can be identified by their size and the dark colored triangle that is located on top of their head and between the eyes. They will also have a stripe that leads from the point of the triangle down the center of their back. The stripe is not always present. If it is present, it can be green, red or orange.

Bullfrog



Northern Cricket Frog

Texas is a large state with many habitat types. These habitat types allow Texas to have 42 species of frogs and toads. The majority of them inhabit the eastern half of the state. Dallas, Tarrant, and adjacent counties are home to approximately half of the species in Texas. The most common of these are; the Northern Cricket Frog, the Southern Leopard Frog, Plains Leopard Frog, Bull Frog, Spotted Chorus Frog, Green Tree Frog, Woodhouse’s Toad, and Gulf Coast Toad. The Metroplex is also home to one invasive species, the Rio Grand Chirping Frog.

The Northern Cricket Frog is the most abundant frog in the Metroplex. They are commonly found near permanent water sources and they can be found calling both day and night. Their call sounds like two rocks being rapidly tapped together. They have an amazingly loud call for their small size. The normal adult size is 1 to 1.5 inches.

The Southern Leopard Frog, the Plains Leopard Frog, and the Bullfrog are all in the “true frog” family *Ranidae*. All three are large frogs. The largest is the Bullfrog. The Bullfrog is also the largest frog in the United States with a record length of 8 inches! The Leopard Frogs are large with a snout to vent length of 3 to 4 inches. The Bullfrog has a very distinct “jug-o-rum” call. Most people can identify it easily. The Southern and Plains Leopard Frogs have similar calls. Their calls are a series of “clucks and cackles”. All three of these frogs will eat anything that will fit in their mouths. Bullfrogs have been known to eat birds, mice, frogs, turtles, and snakes.



The Spotted Chorus Frog is a tiny frog that actively breeds in the late winter and spring. They are explosive breeders when the temperature and rainfall are right to fill temporary pools with water. Their call sounds like someone quickly running their thumb across a plastic comb. Their snout to vent length is .75 to 1.25 inches. Chorus frogs will call day or night but more often at night.

The Green Tree Frog is colored like its name green. It will have a white stripe on the side of its body from its mouth to its groin. It can be found hiding in tall grass and reeds near water during the day. It is a moderate size frog with a snout to vent length of 1.75 to 2.25 inches. The call of this frog is not the most musical. It quickly repeats a series of “quonks”. It is more common on the east side of the metroplex. The Board Walk at the Fort Worth Nature Center is a great place to find and photograph these frogs.



Mark Pyle

Green Tree Frog

The concave area looks like it could hold water if it was poured into it. The top of the head of a Woodhouse’s Toad is much smoother. The call of the Gulf Coast Toad is much like a rivet gun being used in short bursts. The Woodhouse’s Toad sounds similar to a sheep in pain.

The Metroplex has one invasive species; the Rio Grande Chirping Frog. It was most likely brought here in potted plants from the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This extremely small frog is less than 1 inch long. After the eggs are laid in moist soil, they hatch into fully formed frogs in about 2 weeks. The tadpoles go through metamorphosis inside the egg. So far, this little frog does not seem to be causing much trouble with native flora or fauna.



Plains Leopard Frog

Gulf Coast Toad



Mark Pyle

The Woodhouse’s Toad and Gulf Coast Toad are similar in size. The Gulf Coast Toad can have a snout to vent length up to 5 inches. The Woodhouse’s Toad is a little smaller having a snout to vent length of just over 4 inches. Both are commonly found around porch lights eating insects. Both toads have a thin light colored line that runs the length of their back. The Gulf Coast Toad has a concave area on the head created by ridges around it.

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This is not normally the case with introduced species. The African Clawed Frog has been blamed for causing major damage to many native populations of amphibians in many parts of the world. The African Clawed Frog is a carrier of a pathogen called Chytrid Fungus. The African Clawed Frog is not affected by the fungus but other amphibians are. These frogs are often bought as pets. The fungus is able to affect wild populations when the water is changed or through other points of cross contamination. Care should always be given not to introduce a pathogen or non- native species into a new environment.

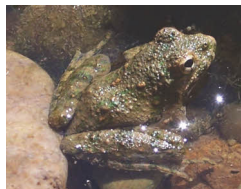


Mark

Sources: • Bartlett, R.D., and P. Bartlett. 1999. A field guide to Texas reptiles and amphibians. Gulf Publishing, Houston.  
 • Conant, Roger and Joseph T. Collins. 1998, 3rd ed. Reptiles and amphibians: Eastern/Central North America. Houghton Mifflin Co. New York, New York.

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 • Texas memorial Museum. 2000. Herps of Texas. <http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/frogs>

# Frog ID



Northern Cricket Frog  
*Acris crepitans*  
Size: 1 -1.5 inches      Diet: insects  
Identification: brown or tan with darker “v” or triangle on head.  
If stripe is present it is green, red, or orange.  
Call: think of two rocks being rapidly hit together.



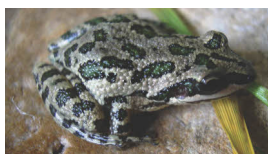
Southern Leopard Frog  
*Rana sphenoccephala*  
Size: 2.25 – 3.5 inches      Diet: Any animal or insect that fits  
Identification: light colored ridges along the sides are not broken.  
Call: series of clucks and chuckles, like finger on a balloon.



Plains Leopard Frog  
*Rana blairi*  
Size: 3 – 4 inches      Diet: Any animal or insect that fits  
Identification: light colored ridges along the sides are broken and inset at groin.  
Call: series of clucks and chuckles, like finger on a balloon.



Bullfrog  
*Rana catesbeiana*  
Size: up to 8 inches, 4 – 6 inches normal  
Diet: Any animal or insect that fits. Can eat birds, frogs, mice and turtles  
Identification: some shade of green, last joint of longest toe does not have webbing  
Call: Very distinct “jug-o-rum”



Spotted Chorus Frog  
*Pseudacris clarkia*  
Size: .75 – 1.25 inches      Diet: insects  
Identification: tan, gray or greenish-gray with irregular green spots.  
Call: similar to a thumb running across the teeth.



Green Treefrog  
*Hyla cinerea*  
Size: 1.75 – 2.25 inches      Diet: insects  
Identification: Green with a white stripe from mouth to groin  
Call: rapid series of “quonks”



Woodhouse's Toad  
*Bufo woodhousii*  
Size: 2.5- 4 inches      Diet: insects  
Identification: White stripe down center of back, lacking deep valley between eyes  
Call: similar to an injured sheep “ w-a-a-a-h”



Gulf Coast Toad  
*Bufo valliceps*  
Size: 2 - 4 inches      Diet: insects  
Identification: Deep valley between eyes  
Call: sounds like some one riveting



Rio Grande Chirping Frog\*  
*Syrrophus cystignathoides*  
Size: .75 – 1 inch      Diet: insects  
Identification: tiny nondescript earth tones, tiny toe pads.  
Call: cricket like chirps that are not in a regular pattern.  
\* introduced species.