



Growling Grass Frog

Litoria raniformis

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Adults

Colouration of the Growling Grass Frog ranges from brown, dull olive to bright emerald green on its back, with brown, golden, black or bronze spots or lines. Large warts, skin folds and tubercules (lumps) cover the back. Down the spine a pale stripe can be seen, while a dark streak runs from the snout, over the eye and tympanum (membrane covering the ear entrance). Above this a skin fold of pale cream runs down towards the



Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko/frogs.org.au)

groin. Below the eye to the base of the arm runs another pale stripe. Both the groin and back are bright blue, sometimes with yellow flecks. They have a

white, granular belly, and almost fully webbed toes. This species can reach between 55 and 100mm in length.



Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko/frogs.org.au)

Tadpoles

Tadpoles are large and dark in colour. However as they develop they become yellow along the body wall and iridescent green over the spine and brain.

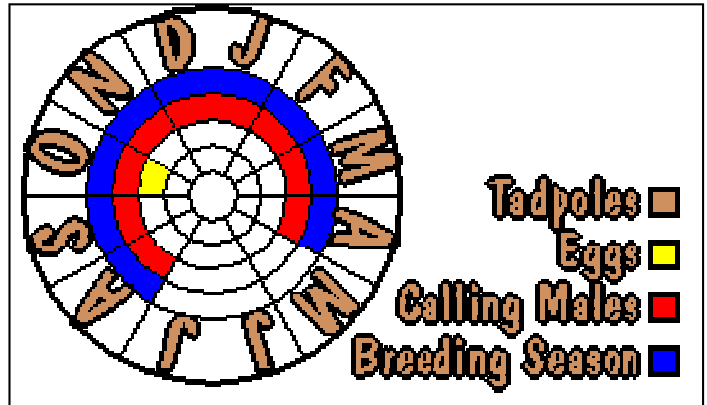
Eggs

The pigmented eggs are large and often attached to vegetation in fluid clusters that will usually fragment and sink. These clusters are often laid in a broad single layer at the edge, or in shallow areas, of water bodies.

LIFE CYCLE AND MATING CALL

Males generally call when floating in open water among vegetation. The call is a growl which lasts for about 1 second—“crawark-crawark-crok-crok”. Male Growling Grass Frogs call after rain in spring, summer and autumn.

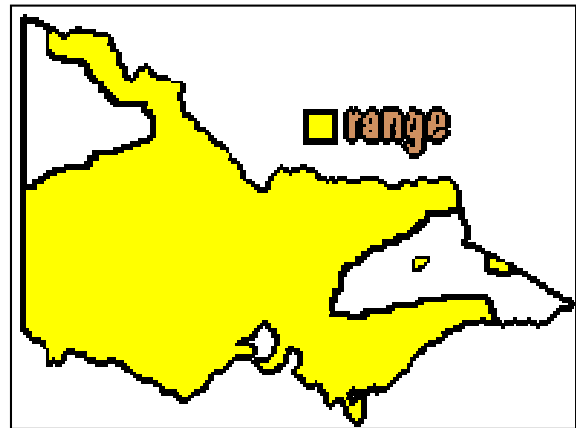
Breeding usually occurs during the spring and summer months. Females are believed to become reproductively mature between 2 and 3 years of age.



Life History Cycle (Source: www.frogs.org.au)

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

This species is widespread, but only locally common, with a highly suspected decline in population numbers. Adults are usually found close to or in water, or very wet areas in woodlands, shrublands and open disturbed areas. Eggs and tadpoles can both be found in permanent lakes, swamps, dams and lagoons.



Victorian Distribution (Source: www.frogs.org.au)

IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL THREATS

The Growling Grass Frog was once widespread and common; these days it is only locally common. It has been classified as endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classification, in addition to its vulnerable listing in the 1997 Action Plan for Australian Frogs, threatened species listing under the *Flora and Flora Guarantee Act 1988* and as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Threatening processes to the survival of this species include the following: inap-

propriate catchment management which results in the deterioration of water quality conditions; introduction and presence of exotic predators such as trout and *Gambusia*; introduction of herbicides and insecticides which causes eutrophication of waterways; diseases/pathogens such as the *chytrid* fungus and other viruses.

Prolonged drought and loss of habitat through the removal of native vegetation and draining of wetlands are thought to have greatly impacted on *L.raniformis* populations.