green frog

Rana clamitans

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Amphibia
Order:	Anura
Family:	Ranidae

Features

The green frog ranges from 2 1/4 to four inches long. Body color can be green, bronze, olive, or brown. The belly is white. The upper lip is lighter and brighter green than the head. The jaw area of males is green and the throat is yellow. Webbing between the toes is incomplete. Distinct dorsolateral folds (two parallel folds of skin) extend about halfway along the back.

Natural History

The green frog lives in permanent streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes with emergent vegetation. This frog is highly aquatic, rarely coming to land. It swims to the bottom to avoid predators. It eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites, etc.), mollusks (snails, slugs, etc.), annelids (earthworms, leeches), and probably any living thing it can swallow. It is a solitary organism, except when breeding. Breeding occurs throughout the summer. The male's call is two or three well-spaced, explosive notes, which resemble the plucking of a banjo string. The female deposits about 4,000 eggs in shallow surface masses on the water. Hatching occurs in a few days. Tadpoles may metamorphose to froglets late in the season if they are from early eggs, but most overwinter and transform in the summer of their second season. Rare in central Iowa, the green frog is becoming more common closer to the Mississippi River. In Iowa, it rarely is seen where bullfrogs are common due to competition from that species.

Habitats

Mississippi River; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, reservoirs; natural lakes and prairie marshes

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

eastern half of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.