

North American Bullfrog

Species Description

Scientific name: *Lithobates catesbeianus*

AKA: *Rana catesbeiana*

Marchlyffant Americaraidd (Welsh)

Native to: Eastern North America

Habitat: Freshwater, mostly ponds and lakes

Its size, obvious eardrum and lack of longitudinal skin folds on the back make this frog relatively easy to recognise. It is easily disturbed so try observing it using binoculars or identifying it from its characteristic calls. Adult males produce a low pitched, droning "rumm...rumm...rumm" call, whilst juveniles have a distinctive squeak when disturbed.

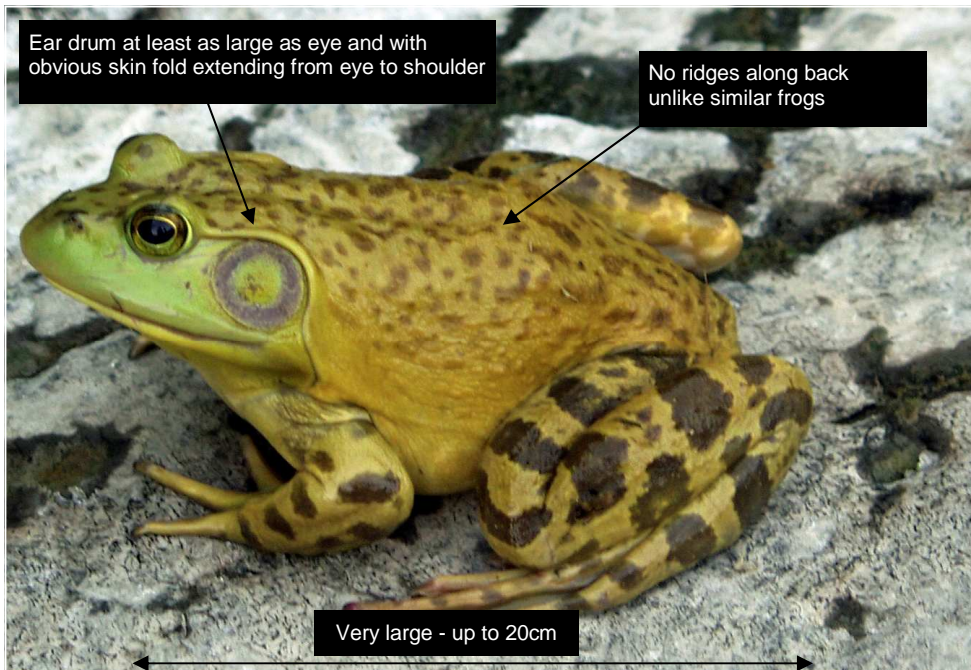
A predator that feeds on a wide range of small animals and may therefore pose a threat to native species in the UK. Introduced to the UK mainly through the pet-trade. Only known from a couple of locations in England. Has been implicated in the decline of smaller, native amphibian species elsewhere in the world. Can be a vector for the chytrid fungus which causes serious disease in some amphibians.

North American bullfrog is listed under Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such it is an offence to release or to allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



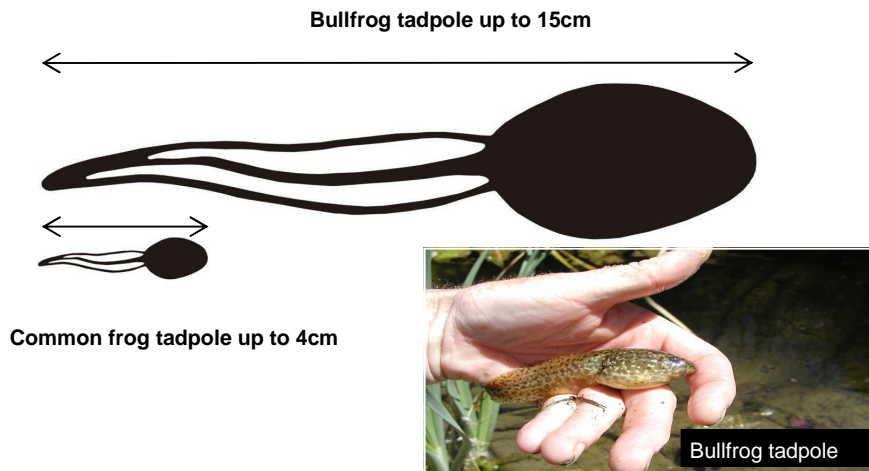
Ear drum in male is larger than the eye, in female ear drum is as large as the eye.

Listen for the adult Bullfrog's distinctive cow-like call and the juveniles' squeaks which can aid detection and identification

Identification throughout the year

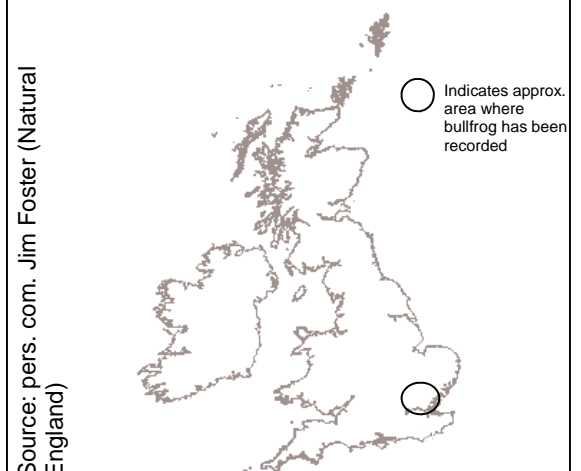
Eggs laid June to July. Very large tadpoles compared to other species.

Relative size of bullfrog tadpole compared to common frog



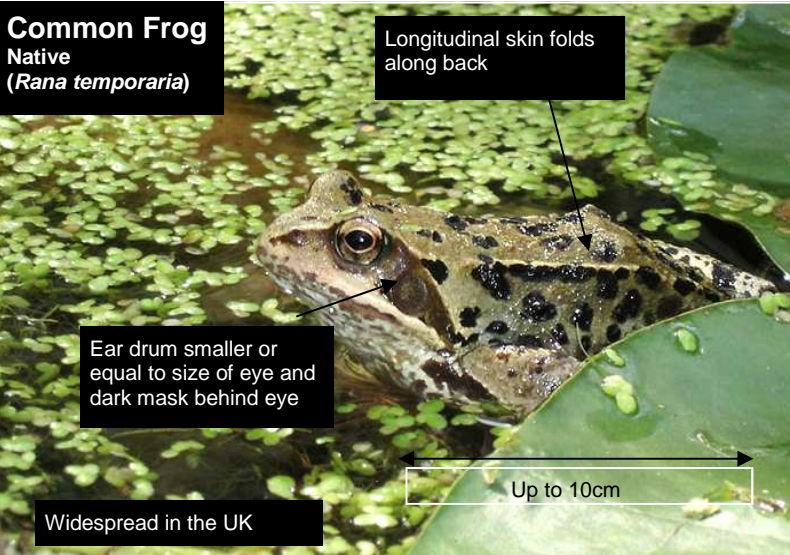
Distribution

One population known from Essex.

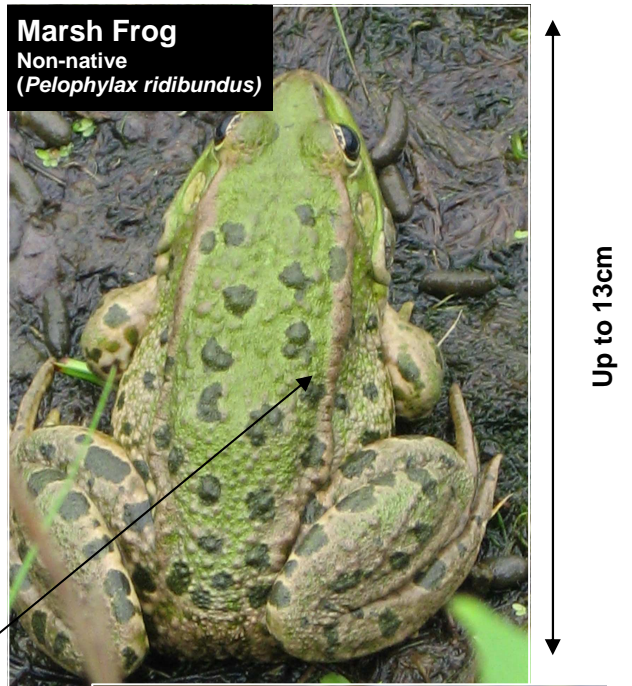


Similar Species

Common Frog
Native
(*Rana temporaria*)



Marsh Frog
Non-native
(*Pelophylax ridibundus*)



Marsh frogs are frequently mistaken for bullfrog, but distinguished by longitudinal skin folds along back and 'laughing' "bre-ke-ke" call. They are locally distributed in the UK and common in some parts of south-east England.



Chytrid Fungus

Bullfrogs are known carriers of the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. This can cause the disease chytridiomycosis which seriously affects some amphibian species. Cases of chytrid infection have been discovered in native amphibians in some parts of the UK.

Chytrid fungus is water borne and so can be accidentally spread between water bodies. When looking for species in and around a waterbody, disinfect all footwear and equipment before moving to other waterbodies to avoid spreading the disease.

References and further reading:

Arnold, E.N & Ovenden, D. W (2002) "Collins Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Britain and Europe". Harper Collins

Sterry, P (2005) "Collins Complete British Animals". Harper Collins

www.californiaherps.com

www.alienencounters.org.uk