



## **Mink Frog (*Lithobates/Rana septentrionalis*)**

*Litho-o-bait-ees sep-tent-trio nal-iss*

*Needs Photos Of*

**Description:** The mink frog is a small to medium sized semi aquatic ranid frog ranging from 1 ½ to 3 inches. They vary in color from green, brown, or greenish brown, and often have prominent irregular darker brown to reddish brown spots, blotches, and/or mottling, typically more so than the similar appearing American bullfrog (*Lithobates/Rana catesbeianus*) and green frog (*Lithobates/Rana clamitans*). Dorsolateral folds may be prominent, weakly defined, or absent. The lips and upper jawline is also typically green in this species.

### **Taxonomy and Classification:**

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Chordata/Vertebrata

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Suborder:** Neobatrachia

**Family:** Ranidae

**Genus:** Rana/Lithobates

**Species:** *Rana/Lithobates septentrionalis*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

**Similar/Confusing Species:** Green frogs (*Lithobates clamitans*) usually have less mottling, more well defined dorsolateral ridges, and do not give off a musky odor. American bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) are larger and lack dorsolateral ridges. For tadpole/larvae identification, see the following link below:

<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/pdf/level1/wepp/TadpoleLarvaSalamanderKeys.pdf>

**Etymology:** Lithobates- Litho (stone) bates (one that walks, treads, hunts). septentrionalis-septentrio (north or northern) alis. Rana-Latin for "frog".

<http://www.madisonherps.org>

**Sounds/Call:** The anurans are perhaps the most audible and vocal of the herptile groups. The mink frog's call sounds similar to a harsh clucking, or a "kuk kuk kuk". Mink frogs may also produce other sounds/vocalizations (such as distress, territorial, or rivalry calls), but some rustling and/or plopping into water may also be heard.

**Subspecies:** None.

**Range & Habitat:** Generally occurs in the northern third of Wisconsin. Mink frogs may be found in permanent to semi-permanent bodies of water including slow moving rivers and streams, marshes, bogs, ponds, and lake shores.

**Habits & Natural History:** Mink frogs are a fairly typical, semi aquatic ranid frog, often favoring lily pads and other aquatic vegetation within the above mentioned habitats as refuge both near and away from the shoreline. Their common name, "mink" frog is derived from this species' ability to secrete a somewhat noxious smelling musk when handled or startled, which is said to smell similar to that of rotting onions. Mink frogs typically emerge from hibernation in April, and begin calling and reproduction in June and July.

**Phenology:** Mink frogs emerge from overwintering as early as the first warm days of mid to late April or May and begin calling from late May through July. They will remain active throughout the rest of the year through late September or October (or sometimes even later in the year if warmer temperatures persist or otherwise permit).

**Conservation Status:** WI Special Concern, regulated by the WI DNR. IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

### **Contact**

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this species, group of species, or this informational sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at [info@madisonherps.org](mailto:info@madisonherps.org)

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