



* Eric Roscoe

Green and Bronze Frogs (*Rana/Lithobates clamitans*)

Anything Except Non-Descript

The green frog, and one of its subspecies, the bronze frog, is a relatively medium to large sized, typical semi-aquatic ranid frog indigenous to most types of permanent to semi-permanent waterbodies over much of the Eastern United States and southern Canada. They, along with American bullfrogs, are often among the last species of frogs to call in the late spring to early summer months. Their call is often said to sound like a loose banjo string being struck. Green frogs and bronze frogs resemble American bullfrogs, and can often be confused with one another, typically being a green, brown, or green to brown ground color sometimes with faint, darker, pencil point spots and barring on the body and limbs. Occasionally, bluish to turquoise green specimens are also seen. The major diagnostic feature of these frogs that distinguish them from the bullfrog are their presence of dorsolateral skin folds along the back or dorsum. Green frogs and bronze frogs are not commonly bred in captivity, at least for the pet trade, but tadpoles and adult frogs may often be available from biological supply companies or for pond rearing. It is important to always be a responsible pet owner and never release any unwanted species into the wild. Always check any applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances that may pertain to the specific possession of this species.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Family: Ranidae

Genus: *Lithobates/Rana*

Species: *Lithobates/Rana clamitans**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, green frogs and bronze frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more in captivity.

Distribution and Habitat

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Green frogs and bronze frogs are a widely ranging species from southeastern Canada (Ontario and Quebec), through much of the eastern and central United States, where they occur in most forms of permanent wetlands and bodies of water including marshes, ponds, lakes, slow moving rivers and streams, swamps, river backwaters, and ditches.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Adult green frogs and bronze frogs can reach 2 to 3 ½ inches in size, with tadpoles being large, between 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must absolutely be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. Green frogs and bronze frogs can be fairly simple to keep in captivity, but they require proper amounts of space, and are very powerful jumpers. Tadpoles and frogs of similar size can be housed together; however housing frogs of disparate sizes together is not advisable. As with other ranid frogs, these frogs can be cannibalistic, and may even attempt to eat each other if adequate food and other resources are not provided. At minimum, a 20 gallon long enclosure can be used to house up to a pair or trio of these frogs, although larger quarters are preferred. Glass aquariums or terrariums overall are can be choices to maintain these large, active frogs in, but they are prone to leaping into the glass and potentially damaging or injuring themselves in the process. If maintained in captivity, visual barricades or opaque walls and sides should be used. A large, sufficiently sized plastic trough or commercially available turtle tub of appropriate size can be used to substitute for aquariums for housing these frogs in. Green frogs and bronze frogs are semi aquatic frogs, and require an area or portion of dry land. This can be used by creating a suitable substrate dam in the enclosure consisting of appropriately sized aquarium gravel and/or sand as substrate and Plexiglas using aquarium silicone that cannot be easily ingested by the frogs. A powerful filtration system and canister is also recommended to help maintain water clarity and quality. Without a filtration system, the enclosure must be cleaned and changed at least 50% twice weekly.

Other furnishings to provide can include live or artificial aquatic plants and vegetation for added aesthetics and to assist in maintaining enclosure quality, and hides such as upturned plastic or ceramic plant pots, log or rock hides, driftwood, or similar hides and furnishings. Spot clean daily and clean the enclosure at minimum every 2 to 4 weeks.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Green frogs and bronze frogs have fairly simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Ambient temperatures in an enclosure for these frogs should be within 75 to 82 degrees F, and water temperatures at around 70 to 75 degrees F. A day/night cycle of 12 to 14 hours can also be provided to replicate natural conditions for these frogs as well. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

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Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; Green and bronze frogs can be voracious predators in the wild, and will feed on a variety of insects, arachnids, worms, and other invertebrates. They may also occasionally catch and consume smaller vertebrates as well. These frogs in captivity should be fed 2 to 3 times weekly. They are very sight oriented feeders, and will eat feeder crickets, roaches, earthworms, redworms, bloodworms, or mealworms as well as feeder fish and occasionally pre-killed rodents of appropriate size, although these prey items should be given only sparingly. They can also be given many commercially available pelleted diets, or freeze dried foods, but these must be animated. Do not overfeed these frogs, or obesity and other health issues can become concerns. Feeder insects should be gut loaded by provided them a quality diet containing vitamins and minerals. Gutloading and dusting insects with vitamin D3 and calcium supplements 1 to 2 times weekly for added nutritional value will greatly benefit the health and well-being of these frogs. Feed them using tongs, forceps, or otherwise in the enclosure or in a dish and not by hand, as they can become acclimated enough to mistake a moving hand or finger as food during feeding. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

Green frogs and bronze frogs are large, active amphibians that, as with most amphibians, do not tolerate excessive handling as a general rule. They can be nervous and skittish, particularly wild collected specimens, although they can become quite accustomed in captivity. As with many frogs and other amphibians, they have smooth, moist, permeable skin that can be susceptible to desiccation (drying out) or direct and indirect contact with any chemicals, oils, or lotions that may be present on human hands. If these frogs are to be handled or restrained, there are a few techniques and methods to do so for semi aquatic ranid frogs including cradling (which involves holding the belly with the hand's palm with the frog's head towards the wrist and index finger between the hind legs) and the thigh hold (firmly grasping the legs about the knee joints to prevent jumping). These frogs are typically not aggressive or prone to biting, but can be skittish or prone to jumping (particularly wild caught frogs).

****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility.

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