



PACIFIC CHORUS FROG

Anura
Family: Hylidae
Genus: *Pseudacris*
Species: *regilla*



Range: Pacific coast from Baja, California, Oregon, Washington up to British Columbia

Habitat: forest wetlands from sea level to 10,000 feet, aquatic habitats for breeding

Niche: Terrestrial (aquatic breeding), carnivorous, nocturnal during dry periods

Wild diet: Tadpoles: bacteria, algae and protozoa. Adults: spiders, beetles, flies, ants, and other insects and arthropods

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism: Males are smaller than females and have a dark patch on their throats

Location in SF Zoo: Wetlands area outside the Education Building

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Pacific Chorus Frog or the Pacific Tree Frog is a small treefrog with a large head, large eyes, a slim waist, round pads on the toe tips, limited webbing between the toes, and a dark mark that goes from their nostrils to their shoulders and looks like a mask. Their legs are long and slender. Their skin is smooth and moist. Colors range from bright green to brown, reddish, or gray. The body color and the dark eye stripe do not change, but the body color can quickly change from dark to light, and dark markings on the back and legs can vary in intensity or disappear in response to environmental conditions. The underside is creamy with yellow underneath the back legs. Some have dark stripes and spots on their backs. The male's throat is darkened and wrinkled.

Weight:

Length: 2 – 3 in

Typical of most frogs, prey is located by vision, then the frog lunges with a large sticky tongue to catch the prey and bring it into the mouth to eat. These frogs' toes are only slightly webbed and have sticky pads on the tips of their toes. The pads allow them to climb plants in search of insects and spiders.

STATUS & CONSERVATION:

While the pacific treefrog has remained abundant over most of its range, population-level declines have been observed in some areas. They are an important wetland species as the provide food for so many animals. Due to pollution, introduced species, habitat fragmentation, and destruction, Pacific chorus frogs have almost disappeared from San Francisco. In 2007, the San Francisco Zoo began working to reestablish a wild population on zoo grounds.

COMMUNICATION & OTHER BEHAVIOR:

The pacific chorus frog is the most commonly heard frog in its range. A group of calling males is known as a chorus. A dominant male, or chorus master, leads off the calling with a “rib-it” or “krek-ek”, which is then followed by subordinate males. The vocal sac, is a dark patch on the male that stretches out when the male is calling. Their throat sac can swell up to three times the size of their head in order to send their calls into the night. Aggressive encounters between adult male Pacific Chorus Frogs are common.

COURTSHIP & YOUNG:

Males move to breeding waters and begin to make their advertisement call and establish their territory. These calls attract more males, then eventually females. During the breeding season, males can be distinguished from females by the color of their throats. Females have a smooth, white throat, while males have a dark brown or yellow throat with wrinkly skin. Breeding occurs at night and is aquatic and fertilization is done by amplexus. Females lay on average between 400 - 750 eggs in small, loose, irregular clusters of 10 - 80 eggs each. Egg clusters are attached to sticks, stems, or leaf litter in quiet shallow water. Females usually lay their eggs in shallow, calm water that has little action around it. The eggs hatch in two to three weeks.

Tadpoles aggregate for thermoregulation and to avoid predation. They also can detect chemical cues from these different predators, and initiate defensive responses that are specific to the predator’s foraging strategy. They may develop enlarged tails when they smell predators. These enlarged tails serve as a lure to distract strikes from the body of the tadpole toward the tail. They can also develop a shape that improves their swimming speed. When pacific treefrog tadpoles detect that their pond is drying, they can accelerate their development rate so that they metamorphose earlier in the year. While this does not always save the tadpoles, it can improve their chances of survival in some ponds.

Incubation: 10 – 12 days # of Eggs: 400 - 700	Sexual Maturity: 1 year Larval stage: 2 – 2.5 mos
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MISCELLANEOUS

Pacific chorus or pacific tree frog is perhaps the most abundant amphibian on the west coast of North America and were one of the only invertebrates to survive in the blast zone when Mount Saint Helens erupted; they that were hidden away underground. Washington designated the Pacific chorus frog (*Pseudacris regilla*) as the official state amphibian in 2007.

In 2007, the Pacific Tree Frog was named the state frog of the State of Washington. The Pacific Tree Frog is a keystone species; many other species such as garter snakes depend upon its abundance as a prey item for their survival.

Sources:

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