

Green Frogs and the Department of Defense



Picture by Paul Block

The Green Frog (*Lithobates clamitans*) is a common frog that is widely distributed across eastern North America. Its characteristic and familiar “glunk-glunk” call has been likened to the sound of a loosely strung banjo, giving it the nickname of “banjo frog.”

Description: Green Frogs are medium-sized frogs measuring 3-5 inches (7.5 to 12.5) in body length, with well-defined dorso-lateral ridges, or skin folds, extending from the back of each eye down the back. The toes are extensively webbed and the second toe is longer than the first. Coloration is generally dark green, but southern populations tend to be brown or bronze. The tympanum (ear drum) of the male is larger than the eye, whereas the tympanum of females is about the same size as the eye.

Range: This species occurs naturally throughout the eastern United States and adjacent southeastern Canada. There are introduced populations established in Newfoundland, British Columbia, Washington, Utah, and probably elsewhere.

Habitat: Green Frogs can be found on the margins of virtually any body of permanent or semi-permanent water. They may disperse from water in wet weather, especially at night. They seek cover under objects on land, underground, or in water when inactive. Breeding sites are shallow, slow- or non-flowing water.



Source: IUCN

Behavior: Breeding occurs in spring or summer. Females deposit 1-2 clutches of up to several thousand eggs. In the south, tadpoles from early clutches may metamorphose in a few months, but in the north, tadpoles overwinter before metamorphosing. Adults are predatory, primarily consuming insects and other invertebrates, but can eat small vertebrates. Tadpoles eat periphyton and phytoplankton that are scraped from aquatic vegetation.

Military Interactions: This species is the second most common frog confirmed present on military properties and is typically encountered both in military training and housing areas.

Conservation Status: The Green Frog has no federal conservation status. It is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in two states at the periphery of its range. It has a NatureServe ranking of G5-Secure, and is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red list.

Threats/Planning Considerations: There are no known major threats. A habitat management practice to benefit this species is to avoid filling wetlands that may be used as breeding sites.

Occurrence on Military Lands	
Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 142 military properties (19 Air Force; 76 Army; 9 Marine Corps; and 38 Navy).	Up to an additional 65 military properties (15 Air Force; 23 Army; 2 Marine Corps; and 25 Navy).

