



**Very High Risk / Impact
in all regions of the Okanagan**

*Poses a significant threat and
does not presently occur in the region.*

American Bullfrog

Lithobates catesbeianus

DESCRIPTION

- The Bullfrog is a very large, robust frog, green or brown in colour and with large golden eyes
- Adult female Bullfrogs may reach 20 centimetres in length and weigh up to 750 grams (male Bullfrogs are smaller)
- Both sexes have a large and distinct tympanum ('ear') just behind and below the eye
- Males have a tympanum roughly twice the size of the eye, while females have a smaller tympanum that is about the same size as the eye
- The sexes may also be distinguished by their throat colour – males have yellow throats, often quite bright, while females have paler cream or white throats
- Bullfrogs lack a dorsolateral fold, which many other similar species have



Bullfrog

You may often see adult bullfrogs floating just beneath the water's surface – all that is visible are their eyes and their green snouts. Even more often, you may hear the deep “bwaa, bwaa” call of the males in the spring and summer; the calls can carry up to a kilometre. Sometimes, when approaching a shoreline, you may hear frogs leaping into the water with loud splashes and “eep!” cries; these are Bullfrogs, avoiding you as a potential predator. None of the native frogs in B.C. do this, though Green Frogs do.

Bullfrog tadpoles can grow up to 15 cm long, as they spend multiple years in the tadpole stage. The tadpoles are very dark green – almost black – in colour, with an arrowhead-shaped body and a dorsal fin that begins behind the body. Newly metamorphosed Bullfrogs are small compared to adult Bullfrogs, but are still as big as the adults of other species.

LOOK-A-LIKE

Green Frogs

(Lithobates clamitans)
another introduced species. They have a conspicuous tympanum like the Bullfrog, however, they have dorsolateral folds that extend along the body, unlike the Bullfrog. They do not grow as large as Bullfrogs.



Green Frog

HABITAT

Bullfrog populations have become established in B.C. in the Lower Mainland, Lasqueti Island, and Vancouver Island as far north as Campbell River. They have also been reported in the South Okanagan.

Bullfrogs need to live in water and seem to prefer fairly shallow, warm ponds and lakes with lots of vegetation. However, Bullfrogs can also live in deep waters and with very little vegetation. Disturbed and newly constructed sites can be at risk for invasion. Sometimes they are seen in ditches and slow streams, but in general they prefer standing water. The breeding ponds must be permanent, due to the long tadpole stage. On occasion, adult or juvenile Bullfrogs may travel over land, dispersing to new ponds; juveniles travel in the fall, shortly after metamorphosis, while adults are more often seen travelling in the spring.

IMPACT AND RISKS

- Because of their large size and voracious appetite, bullfrogs out compete and prey upon many indigenous species.
- Adult bullfrogs are highly predatory, consuming insects and other small invertebrates, birds, small mammals, snakes, fish and other amphibians (including smaller bullfrogs).
- There is evidence that bullfrog colonizations of lakes are followed by declines in the native Red-legged Frog and Pacific Chorus Frog populations.
- Bullfrog tadpoles are primarily herbivorous, grazing on algae and detritus.
- Bullfrog tadpoles compete for food and habitat with the tadpoles of native frogs.
- Bullfrogs can also spread the chytrid fungus, which is responsible for declining amphibian populations.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

- Do NOT keep a bullfrog tadpole or frog as a pet
- Never release bullfrogs into the wild
- Do NOT transport wild bullfrogs or tadpoles from place to place, it is illegal under the Wildlife act to capture, transport, keep or sell wild animals including bullfrogs.
- Large tadpoles can be a tempting pet or a popular addition to your backyard pond, but this has been identified as a primary way bullfrogs have been spreading through the province
- "Build it and they will come!" If you want native frogs in your backyard pond the best thing to do is create a welcoming environment for the frogs: water, shelter and insects
- If you see or hear a bullfrog in the Okanagan report it to OASISS (250-404-0115 or oasiss@shaw.ca)



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