

Marsh Frog

Species Description

Scientific name: *Pelophylax ridibundus*

AKA: *Rana ridibunda*, Eurasian Marsh Frog, Lake Frog, Laughing Frog, Brogargors (Welsh)

Native to: Central and Eastern Europe

Habitat: Most types of waterbodies, including varying flow rates

Relatively easy to distinguish from the common frog by the lack of mask, presence of two vocal sacs on either side of the head, size (generally larger) and call. Much harder to distinguish from the rare pool and edible frogs. Characteristic laughing call means they are usually heard before they are seen. Rarely far from a water body and will scare easily, quickly diving into the water if disturbed.

Introduced to Walland Marsh in Kent in 1935 from Hungary. Now found predominantly in south-east England, but also Devon, Bristol, Isle of Wight, Norfolk and locally in Cornwall. Most populations were introduced, either as pets released into the wild or brought in with fish stock from mainland Europe. Although the marsh frog mainly eats invertebrates, it can eat fish, young birds and other amphibians. Native species may be threatened through predation, competition, or disease transmission.

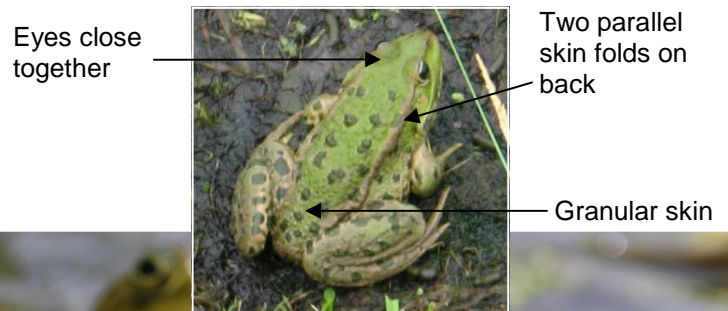
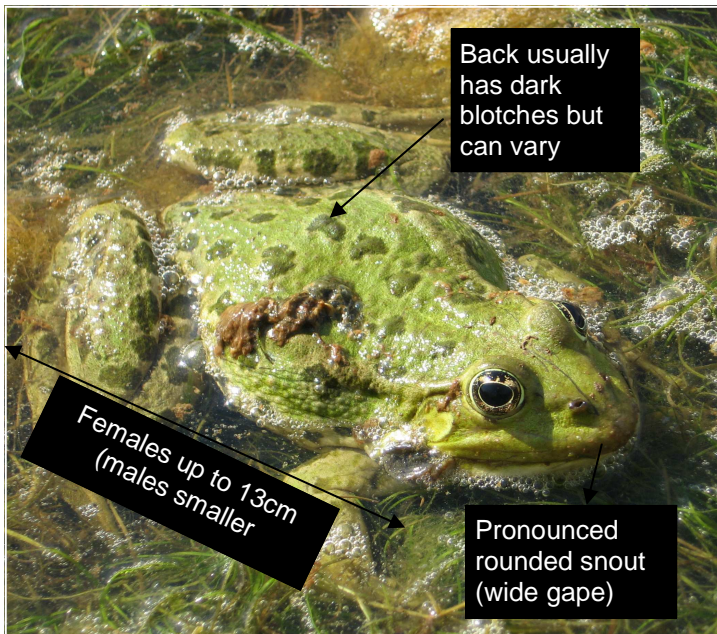
Listed under Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such it is an offence to release or to allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features

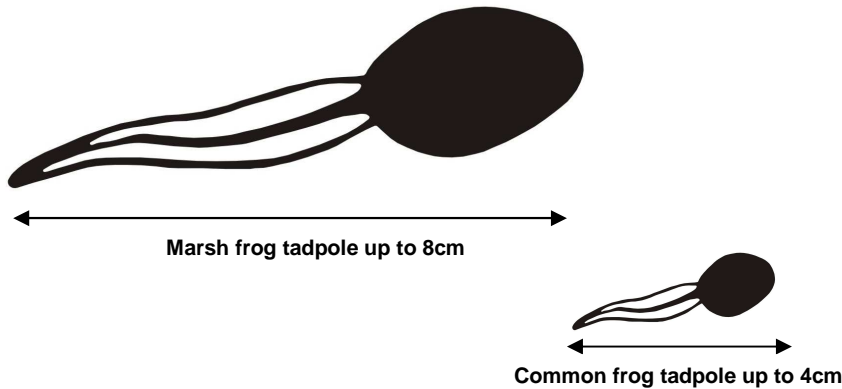
Variable in colour and pattern, but generally brown to green with dark green blotches. May have a light green stripe along spine.



Identification Throughout the Year

Mating starts in spring and eggs are laid in small clumps a few centimetres beneath the water's surface and often attached to vegetation. Tadpoles grow through the summer and metamorphose to small frogs approximately September.

Relative size of marsh frog tadpole compared to common frog



Distribution

Limited. Mostly in the south-east of England, but also Norfolk and parts of south-west England.

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



Similar Species

Water Frog Complex

Marsh frog is part of a group known as the green or water frogs. Other water frogs in the UK include the pool and edible frogs, which are difficult to distinguish from marsh frog. The marsh frog can be distinguished by its larger size (pool and edible frog are rarely larger than 9cm), dark grey vocal sacs (white/light grey in the other species) and laughing call.

Consult the Herpetological Conservation Trust website for further guidance on calls and the distinction between water frogs (see further reading).

Chytrid Fungus

Marsh frogs are known carriers of the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. This can cause the disease chytridiomycosis which seriously affects some amphibian species. Cases of chytrid infection have been discovered in native amphibians in some parts of the UK.

Chytrid fungus is water borne and so can be accidentally spread between water bodies. When looking for species in and around a waterbody, disinfect all footwear and equipment before moving to other waterbodies to avoid spreading the disease.



Both bullfrog and common frog have a single vocal sac positioned under the chin. Marsh frog has two vocal sacs, one on each side of its head

Common Frog Native (*Rana temporaria*)



References and further reading:

Arnold, E N and Ovenden, D W (2002) "Collins Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Britain and Europe". Harper Collins
 Beebee, T and Griffiths, R (2000) "Amphibians and reptiles: a natural history of the British herpetofauna". Harper Collins
www.alienencounters.org.uk