

African Bullfrog

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DO you know that the Australian Reptile Park is the only Zoo in Australia to house the African Bullfrog?

Find out more about the African Bullfrog
African Bullfrog Scientific name: *Pyxicephalus adspersus*

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: They can weigh up to 2 kilograms (4.4 lbs). Unlike most other species of frog, the male is larger than the female. The male can be up to 24 cm (9.5 in.) long and the females are about 12 cm (4.45 in.). Their skin colour is a dull green; the males have yellow throats and the female's throats are cream-colored. Juveniles differ in that they are bright green and have a yellow stripe down their back. This stripe fades away as they mature in about one and a half to two years. Also, older frogs have more obvious skin folds than the younger ones. The body of the frog is very broad, with a short rounded snout, protruding jaw, and tooth-like projections in its lower jaw. It has a large mouth, sharp teeth and very little webbing on its feet. Another way that this bullfrog differs from other frogs is that it has very strong hind legs, which it uses to dig holes in the ground. During the dry season it makes a dry, watertight cocoon for itself, which prevents the evaporation of body fluids; it loses approximately half of the water that a frog without a cocoon loses. The frogs can actually survive for several months in dry soil by absorbing water stored in their bladder. Once the rainy season starts, the moisture will seep into the ground and soak the cocoon. Once it softens enough to split open, the frog eats it. **DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT:** This type of frog is found mostly in open grasslands and at low elevations in the sub-Saharan African countries of Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa (except for the south western Cape Province), Kenya, Rhodesia, Tanzania and the Sudan. **BEHAVIOR:** It is quite aggressive, and has been known to jump at things that it views to be a threat. Because of its sharp teeth, its bite can be quite serious. The male bullfrog will also aggressively defend his eggs if an animal or a human should approach. They tend to congregate around watering holes, including ones occupied by large animals like elephants. The call of the African bullfrog is composed of loud, throaty bellows and deep grunts. These frogs can get rather territorial during mating and begin their mating calls only when they have established their territory. **DIET:** The African bullfrog is carnivorous. It will feed on anything it can fit into its mouth; including insects, small rodents (such as mice), reptiles, birds, and amphibians (including other frogs).

REPRODUCTION AND GROWTH: The African bullfrog lays about three thousand to four thousand eggs in shallow water. The tiny eggs are only about 2 mm, are black and white and are encased in a 4 mm jelly capsule. These eggs hatch about 2 days after being laid. The tadpoles are fat, heart-shaped, and grey to black in colour and their eyes are very close to together, situated on the top of their heads. About 18 days after hatching, the small frogs are 20 mm long and are able to leave the water to live on dry land. After this happens, these frogs have occasionally been known to eat each other. Unfortunately, there is not a very good survival rate for these frogs; only about 20% of young adult females survive.

Want to hear some Bullfrog jokes?

Come to visit the Australian Reptile Park now!!!
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