

Giant Banjo Frog (*Limnodynastes interioris*)



Pupils: Horizontal



Toes: Toe pads absent, minimal to half webbing.



Eggs: Floating, foamy mass.



■ Range

□ North Central Region



Photo Peter Robertson

Other common names: Giant Bullfrog, Giant Pobblebonk, Great Bullfrog, Inland Banjo Frog.

Adult description: The Giant Banjo Frog is Victoria's largest frog. It is powerfully built and a strong burrower and jumper. Grey-brown to olive-green in colour, the skin can be smooth to warty on the back. The underbelly is smooth and yellow, often with black flecks, while the groin is marbled yellow and black. A prominent gland is visible on the hind leg. Most specimens have distinctive yellowish fleshy areas along the jaw line and raised ridgelines along the back. Can grow to 90 mm.

Calling: Males call from either floating vegetation or in burrows or other cover along the water's edge. Their call is a short deep hollow note similar to that of the Pobblebonk (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*) but a much lower pitch - "gunk", "donk" or a reverberating "bonk". Males call almost year round, except for summer which is likely to be due to lack of rain.

Breeding: Breeding occurs in spring, summer and autumn after heavy downpours of rain. Females are thought to first reproduce at two to three years of age.

Eggs & tadpoles: The pigmented eggs are contained within a large foamy mass about 1200-1800 mm in diameter. This is carefully concealed in aquatic vegetation or flooded burrows for protection from predators. The tadpoles are large, dark brown, or black with dark grey fins. The fins, as well as the body, are scattered with dark flecks.

Habitat: The Giant Banjo Frog is fairly uncommon in Victoria and is largely restricted to the Murray River floodplains. It can be found in many different vegetation types around dams, wetlands and streams, but does not necessarily need to be close to a water body as it will burrow into moist soil.

Conservation status & threats: Critically Endangered. Threats include a decline in water quality, increased sedimentation in water bodies, habitat disturbance and degradation, cats, foxes, herbicides and pesticides, predation of eggs and tadpoles by introduced fish and the Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium*).

Interesting facts and features: *Interioris* means "inner", as in inland Australia. Spends most of its life concealed underground, emerging only after rain to feed and spawn. Most often confused with the Pobblebonk Frog (*L. dumerilii*) from which it can be easily distinguished by having a bright belly colouration.

L. dumerilii has a plain white or orange/yellow belly that is heavily mottled with black or steel grey.

