

# Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*)



Pupils: Horizontal



Toes: Toe pads present, not wider than digits.



Eggs: Floating raft of eggs in jelly.



■ Range

□ North Central Region



Photo © Lydia Fucsko 2011

**Other common names:** Green and Golden Frog, Southern Bell Frog, Warty Swamp Frog.

**Adult description:** The Growling Grass Frog is also known as the Southern Bell Frog or the Warty Swamp Frog. Their colour varies from olive to bright emerald green with irregular bronze, gold brown or black spotting. Their backs are warty and usually have a pale green stripe down the middle. The Growling Grass Frog is one of the largest frog species in Australia. The females (60-104 mm) grow much larger than the males (55-65 mm).

**Calling:** The male calls out after rain in spring, summer and autumn. Whilst floating in open water, they usually call with several distinctive short grunts, followed by a long deep growl that lasts for about one second "Craark Craark Crok Crok Crok".

**Breeding:** Breeding usually occurs during the spring and summer months. Females are believed to become reproductively mature between two and three years of age.

**Eggs & tadpoles:** The pigmented eggs are large, contained within a floating jelly raft and often attached to vegetation for protection and stability. Often they are laid in a broad single layer at the edge, or in shallow areas of water bodies. The clusters may later break up and sink. The tadpoles are large and initially dark in colour. As they develop they lighten, turning a pink-grey to yellow colour with iridescent green over the spine and brain, and yellowish fins. They can reach 100mm before they metamorphose into frogs.

**Habitat:** Growling Grass Frogs prefer to live amongst reeds, sedges and rushes growing in and along slow moving streams, ponds, lagoons, swamps, lakes and farm dams. They can be found floating in warmer waters with temperatures between 18 and 25°C.

**Conservation status & threats:** Listed as a Threatened Species under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and as Vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Threats include a decline in water quality, loss, fragmentation and disturbance of suitable habitat, cats, foxes, herbicides and pesticides, introduction and presence of exotic predators such as trout and Gambusia and the Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium*).

**Interesting facts and features:** Growling Grass Frogs primarily feed on ground-dwelling insects such as beetles, termites, cockroaches, moths, butterflies and insect larvae. Interestingly, they will also eat small lizards, snakes, fish and other frogs, including smaller Growling Grass Frogs. They are not active hunters, preferring to sit and wait for their prey to come to them. They respond positively to habitat restoration, providing there are floating or emerging water plants. Growling Grass Frogs were once abundant in Victoria, and were commonly used for dissections in universities and to feed the snakes at the Melbourne Zoo.

