

Eastern Banjo Frog

'Banjo Frog's Concert Spectacular' is a children's storybook set in the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, part of the Mt Lofty Ranges. This information sheet is one of a series on the heroes of the story.

Introduction

The Eastern Banjo Frog, *Limnodynastes dumerilii dumerilii*, is one of five subspecies of Banjo Frogs and is the most widespread.

This subspecies normally inhabits woodland, heathland and farmland. It requires aquatic habitat (water) for breeding and terrestrial habitat (land) for foraging. Although the Eastern Banjo Frog remains abundant and widespread, it is still affected by habitat loss, both terrestrial and aquatic. For many frog species, including Eastern Banjo Frog, clearing and overgrazing of land (including contributions by wild rabbits), degradation/drainage of aquatic habitats, water pollution, Chytrid fungus and development remain current threats.

Managing rabbit impacts is important to reduce habitat loss for Eastern Banjo Frogs.

Fun Fact

The Eastern Banjo Frog gets its name from the 'plonk' or 'bonk' sound the males make, which sound like a banjo string being plucked.

Description

Eastern Banjo Frogs are large (up to 9 cm long) and brownish-coloured. They have dark warty backs, a prominent lump on their hind leg (the tibial gland that is thought to deter some predators) and a smooth white or mottled belly. They are distinguished from other subspecies by more orange present on the flank and an orange raised stripe from below the eye to the top of the front leg (shoulder).

The fingers and toes of the Eastern Banjo Frog are not webbed, but they have a shovel or spade-like structure on their hind toe that helps them dig. When the tadpoles hatch, they are dark brown and spotted. They can take up to 15 months to develop into frogs, depending on the temperature.



Source: Atlas of Living Australia.

Fun Fact

*South Australia is home to two of the subspecies of Banjo Frog – the second is the Southern Banjo Frog (*L. dumerilii variegata*) in the South-East region. This subspecies has brilliant blue markings in its groin! All five subspecies of *Limnodynastes dumerilii* have different skin colouration/markings.*

Distribution

The national distribution of Eastern Banjo Frog (*L. dumerilii dumerilii*) includes NSW, northern Victoria, Murray River and South Australian regions of the Mt Lofty Ranges, Flinders Ranges, Kangaroo Island and Murray Valley. Its distinctive sound is typical of the Australian bush.

Although the Eastern Banjo Frog remains abundant and widespread, they are affected by habitat loss. Wild European rabbits have contributed to habitat loss, which is a major threat to the survival of frogs.

Did you know?

Males compete with their 'bonk' call to attract females emerging from burrows after rain. Sometimes it sounds like two 'bonk' notes are called together but it is usually another frog rapidly calling after the first one.

Did you know?

Banjo Frogs can live up to 10 years.

Habitat & Habits

Eastern Banjo Frogs occur in a wide range of habitats including urban areas (especially gardens), heathlands, woodlands, farmlands, wetlands, rivers and dams. They burrow in loamy soils and emerge to feed and breed after rains. Dense vegetation around wetlands is ideal for them, especially if there is a diverse mix of plants supporting a variety of invertebrates that they eat.

Eggs and tadpoles occur in still water in swamps, streams, dams and lakes.

The Eastern Banjo Frog is a burrowing frog. With its powerful hind legs, it can dig backwards into the ground where it can remain until it rains, when they emerge and can be seen in large numbers. The male frogs generally call from in the water but may also call while underground (creating an echoing sound) and can do so at any time of the year after rain. Under the right conditions mass spawning can occur over just a few days, usually between August and April.

The Eastern Banjo Frog follows the typical diet of most frogs, feeding on small invertebrates like insects, worms, slaters, snails and spiders. In their tadpole form they graze on aquatic plants and algae.

Did you know?

Banjo Frogs can be quite warty, and can sometimes be mistaken for cane toads. Cane toads are much larger – up to 15 cm – and have dry skin while the frogs are moist. You can recognise a toad by the large poison glands behind the ears, a pointed bony ridge between the nose and eyes, and visible eardrums. In toads the back feet are webbed; Banjo Frogs' hind-feet are unwebbed.

Fun Fact

This frog species exercises parental care! Using large flaps of skin on her fingers, the female carries air bubbles from the surface of the water into the foam raft to keep the eggs oxygenated.

Easter Bilby's Friends

Easter Bilby and friends are all affected by rabbits and other pressures like loss of habitat and predation. They want their homes, their food and their friends back. People are the key to environmental recovery; and more information on the people and organisations helping Easter Bilby's Friends can be found on the Easter Bilby's Friends website www.easterbilbysfriends.com.au.



For more information on the Eastern Banjo Frog and actions to help protect the subspecies, look at the following key documents: **Wildlife Victoria Fact Sheet: Pobblebonk** and **Backyard Buddies: Banjo Frog**.

Eastern Banjo Frog's names:

Scientific name – *Limnodynastes dumerilii dumerilii*

Kurna name – tungkthungku

Ngarrindjerri name – menperi or ko:pili

Other common names – Pobblebonk, Bull Frog

Related species:

Limnodynastes dumerilii greyi (Mid-South Eastern Banjo Frog, coastal NSW)

Limnodynastes dumerilii fryi (Snowy Mountains Banjo Frog, Snowy Mountains NSW)

Limnodynastes dumerilii insularis (Southern Banjo Frog, southern NSW, Victoria, Tasmania)

Limnodynastes dumerilii variegata (Southern Banjo Frog, western Victoria, south-east South Australia)

More information about Rabbit-Free Australia

Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia Inc.

Email: admin@rabbitfreeaustralia.org.au

Web: www.rabbitfreeaustralia.org.au

Social media: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

ABN: 96 353 157 496



Bilbies Not Bunnies