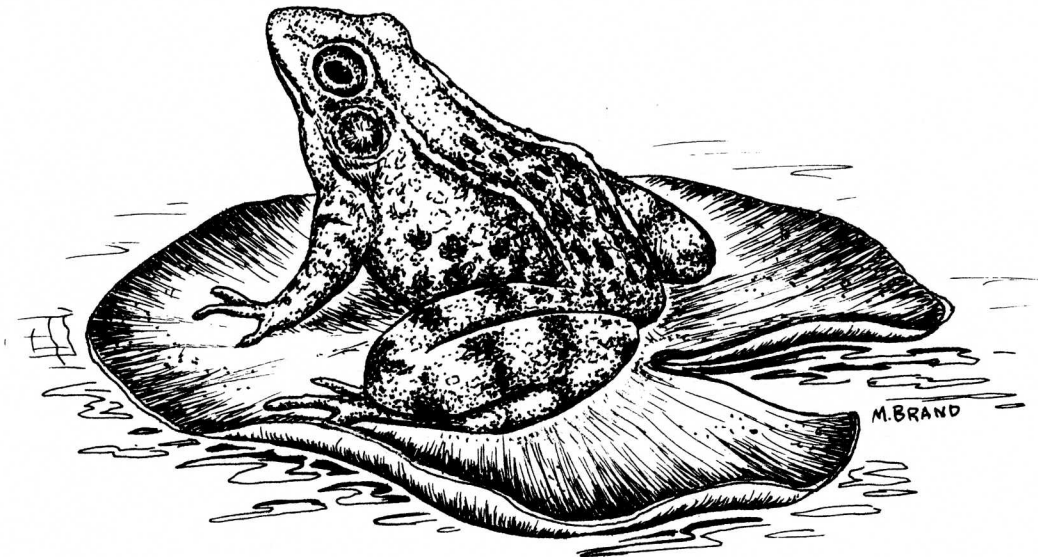


# Naturalist Notebook

## RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

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### Green Frog - *Rana clamitans*

The green frog (*Rana clamitans*) is native to the eastern and southern United States. The green frog is also called the bronze frog in places, as its color can vary from a classic frog green to bronze with a white underside. This medium-sized frog lives in and around lakes and ponds. While we typically think of frogs as water-dwellers, only the green frog and the bullfrog actually live in or near water year-round.

Due to their overlapping range, similar habitat needs, and coloration, green frogs and bullfrogs are often confused. Both can be found in swamps, ponds, lakes, marshes, bogs, and slow moving streams, and both species are green in color. Additionally, large green frogs can be bigger than small bullfrogs, so size is not a reliable identifying factor. The key difference between green frogs and bullfrogs is the two ridges – dorsolateral lines – that run down the back of the green frog.

Green frogs breed from late-spring into summer in the lakes and ponds where they live. Males have a deep call that sounds like a single or repeated pluck of a banjo string. Each male covers a specific area, and females pick their

mates based on the best territory. Eggs are deposited in a mass and fertilized in the water after the female has deposited them on the surface or on a piece of vegetation. 1,000 to 5,000 tadpoles can result from a single egg mass.

Tadpole development can take 3 to 22 months, with most tadpoles taking about a year to metamorphose into froglets. The main factors that influence length of development are the quality of the environment, the amount of food present, and the time of year. Green frog tadpoles are mostly bottom-feeding vegetarians. If tadpoles cannot develop into healthy froglets before the weather starts to turn cold, they will remain in the pond over the winter. During the winter, tadpoles will either feed actively or settle into mud and leaves on the bottom of the pond, depending on the temperature of the water.

As a common species in much of the United States, the green frog is currently not threatened with extinction. However, habitat destruction, run-off, and pollution could ultimately become destructive for these beautiful frogs.