



**PRECIOUS FROG**  
HELP RECOVER THE  
OREGON SPOTTED FROG

**Identification Guide**  
for **Frogs and Toads**  
of low-elevation wetlands of the  
**Fraser Valley of BC**

[www.preciousfrog.ca](http://www.preciousfrog.ca)

**How to use this guide**

This document provides guidelines to identify frogs and toads in the low-elevation wetlands of the Lower Fraser Valley of British Columbia. It focuses on features that differentiate similar species.

Introduced frogs, the American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) and the Green Frog (*Lithobates clamitans*) are now common in the Fraser Valley and should be euthanized when caught.

Commonly encountered native species are the Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*) and the Northern Pacific Tree Frog (*Pseudacris regilla*). Both are found in a wide variety of wetland habitats and forested habitats. Coastal Tailed frogs (*Ascaphus montanus*), found in steep mountain streams, are not covered in this guide.

Two native ranid frogs are similar and easy to confuse: the Endangered Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*) and the Threatened Northern Red-Legged Frog (*Rana aurora*). Open to Page 2 for an overview of features that differentiate between the two species.

Find more photos of our local native species at

[www.preciousfrog.ca](http://www.preciousfrog.ca)

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**Fraser Valley Conservancy**  
Placing lands in trust for our future



**If the frog has a prominent tympanum (eardrum) as large as or bigger than the eye, and has a green lip-line, it is an American Bullfrog or a Green Frog, both invasive species.**

**Green Frog**  
(*Lithobates clamitans*, LICL)

**Invasive Species!**

Green lip line  
Prominent tympanum (ear drum)  
Dorso-lateral fold / ridge runs from eye to hip.

Male tympanum significantly larger than eye. Mature breeding males have bright yellow throat.

Female has tympanum similar in size or a little larger than eye, and white throat.

Immature frogs have dorso-lateral fold to hip and pale green lip line to shoulder.



**American Bullfrog**  
(*Lithobates catesbeianus*, LICA)

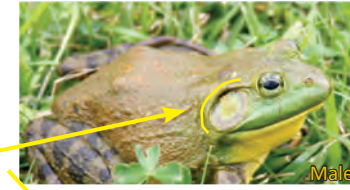
**Invasive Species!**

Green lip line  
Prominent tympanum (ear drum)  
Prominent glandular fold curves behind tympanum.

Male tympanum significantly larger than eye. Mature breeding males have bright yellow throat.

Female has tympanum similar in size or a little larger than eye, and white throat.

Immature frogs have glandular fold around tympanum and less prominent lip line.



**Western Toad**  
(*Anaxyrus boreas*, ANBO)

**Special Concern**

Adults have large parotoid glands and rough, bumpy skin.

Short, squat appearance with short legs for walking / crawling rather than hopping.

Hind feet strong with rubbery knobs for digging.

Distinctive pale-coloured dorsal stripe but skin colouration is not distinctive.

Juveniles have rough, bumpy skin and can be almost black in colour to terra-cotta red or dark green.

Large aggregations of juveniles seen in late summer.



**Northern Pacific Tree Frog**  
(*Pseudacris regilla*, PSRE)

**Native**

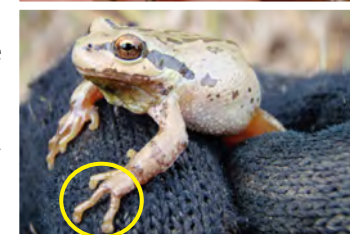
Distinctive dark eye band or mask from eye to forearm.

Toes are long and narrow, with rounded toe-pads for climbing.

Colouration is highly variable and can be dependent on location. Range from pale yellow to bright green, terra-cotta red to dark brown.

Males have dark grey throat pouch in breeding season.

Juveniles are similar to adults with dark mask.





**PRECIOUS FROG**  
HELP RECOVER THE OREGON SPOTTED FROG

# Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*, RAPR, Endangered)

AND

# Northern Red-Legged Frog (*Rana aurora*, RAAU, Threatened)

## ADULTS

## IMMATURE

## TADPOLES



Oregon Spotted Frog

**No yellow at hip.** Belly mottled grey-white to bright red.



Red-Legged Frog

**Mottled bright yellow patches on sides at hip.**



**Diagnostic for adults only.**

Skin of legs opaque, colour ranges from white to red. Cannot see through to bone and muscle.

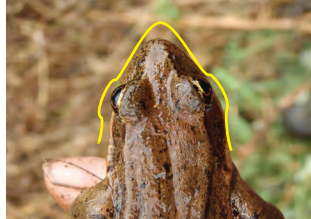


From above, eyes do not (or only slightly) protrude beyond body line. Rounded snout.



Raised bumps on sides (and often back) of frog.

Skin of legs translucent, pink with gold and yellow flecks. Bone, muscle and ligaments visible.



From above, eyes protrude beyond body line. More pointed snout.



Smooth skin on sides and back. Not bumpy.



Oregon Spotted Frog

Pale, distinct lip-line to shoulder. Dorso-lateral folds vague on lower back.



No yellow hip patch.



From above, eyes do not (or only slightly) protrude beyond body line. Eyes gold coloured.



Rounded snout.

**Legs of both translucent. Underside pattern not distinctive.**

Note that distinct 'harness' shaped pattern on chest (per Corkran & Thoms 2006) is NOT indicative of species, and is present on all recently-metamorphosed individuals.



Red-Legged Frog

Pale, distinct lip-line to shoulder. Reddish dorso-lateral folds prominent to hips.



Mottled yellow hip patch.



From above, eyes protrude beyond body line. Eyes usually copper coloured.



Pointed snout



Oregon Spotted Frog

Belly pale with fine-grained markings or no mottles in later stages.



**Not diagnostic, particularly in more developed larvae**

Upper tail fin extends to the base of the tail.



Red-Legged Frog

Belly mottled with irregularly shaped pigmented blotches on a dark background.



Upper tail fin is tall, sail-like, and extends to the middle of the back of the body.

## TADPOLES - Other Species



N. Pacific Tree Frog

Mouth small, oriented forwards. Body < 20 mm, pale rounded belly, short tail. Eyes protrude beyond body line when viewed from above.



Green Frog

**Large tadpoles with dark upper and creamy yellow belly.**

Upper and lower fin lightly mottled.



Western Toad

Very small and dark with uniformly black or charcoal tail trunk and body. Tail fins translucent. Usually in large congregations.



American Bullfrog

Dorsal fin and tail muscles spotted with distinct dots, ventral fin unmarked.

If you suspect you have found an Oregon Spotted Frog, please take photographs of the frog from the **top**, **side with leg extended** and of its **underside**. Forward photos and location information (with coordinates, if possible) to [info@preciousfrog.ca](mailto:info@preciousfrog.ca). You may have found a new population!