

Pacific Chorus Frog

Pseudacris regilla (Baird and Girard 1852)

INTRODUCED



TAXONOMY. Formerly known as the Pacific Treefrog, *Hyla regilla*, the species was transferred to the genus of chorus frogs, *Pseudacris*, a move supported by most authors. A recent study suggests that *P. regilla* likely encompasses more than one species but that further analysis of study material from across the entire range is needed to help clarify the situation. A number of subspecies have been proposed, though infrequently used in the literature (the subspecies of Pacific Chorus Frog translocated to Alaska from Kirkland, King County, Washington is considered *P.r. regilla* by some authors).

DESCRIPTION. Adult Pacific Chorus Frogs are small, measuring between 1.9-5.6 cm (0.75-2.2 in.) SVL. They have a rounded snout, large eyes, a relatively large head with a conspicuous dark mask, prominent toe pads, and limited webbing. The dorsal color and pattern is highly variable and can be quickly lightened or darkened. Both green- and brown-dominated color morphs have been seen in the introduced population on Revillagigedo Island. The undersides are cream colored and yellowish on the hindquarters. Males have a wrinkled, dusky throat, with a round vocal

sac that when calling can balloon out to a size three times as large as the head. The amplified call sounds like "wreck it" or "kreck-ek", repeated every second or so, and throughout the night and part of the day during the spawning season.

DISTRIBUTION. This frog is found at various elevations from southern British Columbia, including Vancouver Island, to Baja California and east to Idaho and Utah. It has been introduced on the Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte) Islands off the coast of British Columbia, and in the Alexander Archipelago on Revillagigedo Island near Ward Lake. The Ward Lake population was still extant in 2002; it has apparently not spread beyond the muskeg pond system where the original tadpoles and transforming frogs from western Washington were first introduced about 1960.

NATURAL HISTORY. The Pacific Chorus Frog is primarily a ground dweller that inhabits a wide variety of vegetation from grasslands to woodland forests, usually in low vegetation close to water. Frogs introduced near Ward Lake were found using clumps of grasses and sedges for cover adjacent to muskeg pond margins.



An extant population of Pacific Chorus Frog (formerly Pacific Treefrog) was introduced to a group of muskeg ponds near Ward Lake on Revillagigedo Island sometime around 1960. They apparently have remained confined to this one area for more than 30 years.

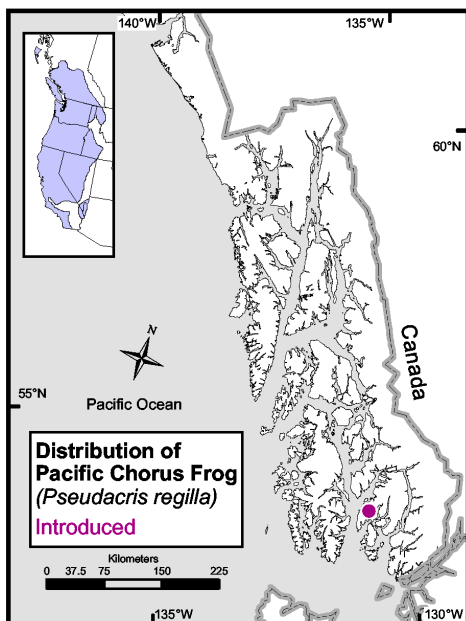
Male frogs were reported calling at the introduction site near Ward Lake on 24 and 26 May 1992, and mating pairs, individual frogs, and egg masses were observed in June. Eggs are laid in a soft, tight, rounded mass (up to 4 cm in diameter) and attached to submerged vegetation or on the bottom of shallow waters. Tadpoles develop rapidly and are ready to leave the water well before winter. During mild winters

on the southern coast of British Columbia, this frog apparently does not hibernate.

CONSERVATION. So far, Alaska's only known population seems to have remained confined to the same pond system where it was first introduced. The only other amphibians known to occur on the island are Western Toad and Roughskin Newt. These species have bred, apparently successfully, in the same muskeg ponds as the non-native chorus frog.

REMARKS. A group of calling males is known as a chorus. A dominant male, or chorus master, leads off the calling, which is then followed by subordinate males.

SELECT REFERENCES. Hedges 1986, da Silva 1997, Reimchen 1990, Waters et al. 1996.



The pigmented eggs of this chorus frog are laid in clusters and attached to submerged vegetation or occasionally on the bottom in shallower water. This species has been known to breed in brackish water.



Tadpoles are light greenish-gray and have a short, round body that may reach 20 mm SVL or more before transforming. In top view, the eyes poke out at the edge of the head instead of being more centrally positioned as in the tadpoles of Alaska's other frogs and toad.

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