

American Bullfrogs and the Department of Defense

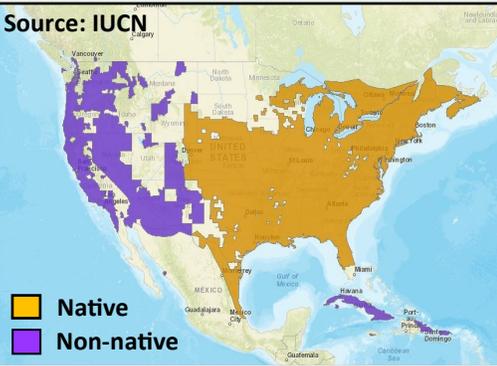


Picture by: Jarrod Derr

The American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) is one of the largest frog species in the United States. It is the most abundant frog species confirmed present on military lands and is also the most common native transplant herpetofauna species on DoD sites.

Description: Adults are typically 3.6 to 6 in (9 to 15.2 cm) in length. They have been known to grow up to 8 inches (20.3 cm) or more and weigh up to 1.5 lbs. (680 g). Male Bullfrogs are green in color, whereas females are gray-brown with dark brown spots. During the mating season, the throat of adult males becomes yellow. The external part of the eardrums appears as large circular discs behind the eyes, with a fold of skin curving around the top and rear edges. The hind toes are mostly webbed, but the 4th toe extends beyond the webbing.

Range: Its native range extends from Nova Scotia, Canada, south to central Florida, west to the Rocky Mountains and south into northern Mexico. It is one of the worst (most successful) invasive species on the planet and has been widely introduced into many parts of the



world, including North America west of the Rocky Mountains.

Habitat: This species inhabits nearly any source of permanent water, including ponds, swamps, lakes, reservoirs, marshes, stream margins, and irrigation ditches. It winters at the bottom of pools or under various sorts of cover in or near water. Individuals often remain in one pond or in a cluster of adjacent ponds throughout a season, but may move up to a mile or more from one year to the next. Breeding, egg laying, and tadpole development sites are primarily permanent, slow or non-flowing, bodies of water.

Behavior: American Bullfrogs are ambush predators and will eat any animal that can be captured and swallowed, including insects, mice, fish, birds, and snakes. Its call consists of a series of notes, *rum rum rum* or *jug-o-rum*, and their choruses can be heard during the day or night. Breeding occurs during late spring and early summer, and a single females can lay up to 20,000 eggs during this period. Normal lifespan is about 4-5 years. This species is commercially farmed for food and teaching purposes in many countries throughout the world.

Military Interactions: The American Bullfrog is the most abundant native transplant species on DoD sites. This species should be eradicated on military installations outside of its natural range. It is believed that this species has negative impacts to native amphibians by competing with them for resources and predation.

Conservation Status: The American Bullfrog is not federally- or state-listed as endangered or threatened. This species has a NatureServe conservation ranking of G5-Secure and IUCN Red List category as Least Concern. In some states they are illegal to possess or transport, have daily or seasonal collection limits, or are prohibited to import or export.

Threats/Planning Considerations: This species has no major threats. Outside its natural range, it is considered a pest and should be eradicated.

Occurrence on Military Lands

Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 87 Army, 51 Navy, 31 Air Force and 10 Marine Corps installation across its natural and introduced range.	Up to an additional 52 Army, 53 Navy, 41 Air Force and 5 Marine Corps installations across its natural and introduced range.

