



Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog (Banana Box Frog)

Litoria fallax

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Adults

The adult form of this frog species is either all green, green with fawn legs or fawn all over. Underneath the eye to the base of the arm a white stripe is evident, and they have orange on the backs of their thighs and groin area. Smooth skin covers the back, and their underside is granular. The toes are almost fully webbed, with very large pads. This species reaches only about 25mm in length.



Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko/frogs.org.au)

Tadpoles

The tadpoles are small and cylindrical, displaying a variety of colours from clear gold, olive brown, to dark brown or mottled. Colour of the tadpoles will change

to a bright green during development. They feed from the surface and forage throughout the water body.



Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko/frogs.org.au)

Eggs

Eggs are laid, by the female, in a cluster onto the stem of vegetation where the male promptly fertilises them. This cluster will either remain stuck to the vegetation or become unattached and sink. Hatchlings will occur three to five days after laying and are semi-transparent yellow speckled with black spots.

LIFE CYCLE AND MATING CALL

The Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog has a high pitched call comprised of two parts (diphasic), a long drawn out “wr-e-e-ek” followed by a sharp “kik kik, kik kik”. Males are heard calling from vegetation prior to, during, and after rain. Peak call-

ing periods are in spring and summer. Breeding occurs amongst abundant vegetation in dams, ponds and swamps. Females are thought to become reproductively active at less than 2 years of age.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

The Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog does not naturally occur in Victoria. It is naturally found along the eastern coast of Queensland and New South Wales where it is common and widespread. It has been introduced to Victoria via the transport of fresh produce.

It resides in swamps, lagoons and dams, usually found on reeds and floating vegetation. In its natural range it can be found on the leaves of *Pandanus*, banana and pineapple plants.



Australian Distribution (Source: www.frogs.org.au)

IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL THREATS

The Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog, also frequently referred to as the Banana Box Frog and has been transported to Victoria via the delivery of fresh produce including bananas and other types of fruit. For this reason frogs of this species are commonly found in the immediate vicinity of grocery shops or supermarkets which receive produce from Queensland and New South Wales.

There is a real concern that this species may replace other frog species found naturally in Victoria and/or the spread of amphibian disease. Research has shown that there are actively breeding populations of the Eastern Dwarf Tree

Frog within the Melbourne vicinity. An increase in lead to increased competition for space and food resources with frog species found naturally throughout Victoria.

The Victorian Frog Group have developed a program to deal with Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs that have been found outside their natural range. They provide a service where volunteers will come and collect the frog from anywhere across Victoria, place the frog into quarantine for at least one month after which it can be purchased as a pet.

Please visit www.frogs.org.au/vfg/