



Teatown Trails

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE TEATOWN LAKE
RESERVATION OF THE BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

Our Purpose . . . to maintain forever the unspoiled natural beauty and wildlife of a varied landscape . . . and to promote, through a community education center, a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of our natural environment.

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BELICIOUS BULLY OF THE BOGS

Everyone knows that some snakes prey on frogs but how many are aware of a reverse order? The common bullfrog, *Rana catesbiana* has a most peculiar diet. Not only are snakes included on his menu, but so are small turtles, birds, fish and mice. In fact, most anything that moves and is of proper size is fair game for the belligerent bullfrog.

A young water snake approaching a bullfrog with ill intent may find a sudden change on the menu, featuring himself as the "piece de resistance." The snake who bites off more than he can chew may find himself within the stew!

Bullfrogs are more aquatic than any other frogs and seldom stray from water. They are our largest frog and may measure seven inches without the legs extended.

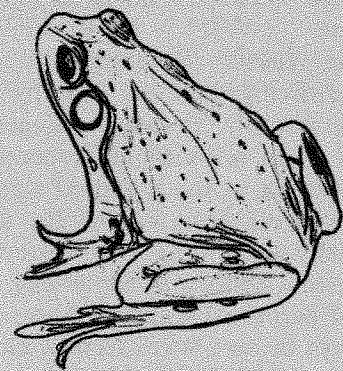
The bullfrog is easy to distinguish from his jumping cousins even if he is not full grown. There is a short fold of skin extending backward from the eye, over the ear, and down to the forelegs. The green frog, the only other frog in our area that resembles the bullfrog in color and size, has skin folds from the eyes all the way back to the posterior end of the body.

Bullfrog tadpoles take two or three years to develop. Consequently, the large pollywogs can be found at any season — even through the ice. The mature frogs hibernate on lake bottoms practically buried in the mud and obtain enough oxygen to survive via absorption through the skin.

Because bullfrogs are in constant demand by fine restaurants for their tasty legs, it has been necessary to place a closed season on them. It is illegal to take

bullfrogs in New York State except from July 16th to Sept. 30th. Frogs can be taken at this season during daylight only.

Bullfrogs are best known for their resonant, mellow voices. Without them summer would not be the same. They do not sing in chorus but invariably will answer the call of another bullfrog. They will also respond to loud noises such as a passing train or jet plane. In fact, there is some evidence that increasing jet traffic around airports is seriously affecting the mating behavior of a species which depends upon certain territorial calls and responses! A worse threat to the bullfrog however, is loss of habitat and a high annual loss of its eggs. Children can't resist collecting them. Usually these eggs perish in small jars on some window ledge due to a lack of oxygen.



Be kind to your web-footed friends, for there is evidence that they are declining in many areas. Frogs belong in a marsh or lake, not in little boy's pockets. Above all, leave the eggs of amphibians where you find them.