

Coastal Plain Leopard Frog (*Rana sphenocephala*)

Pennsylvania Endangered Amphibian

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled), Global Rank: G5 (secure)

Identification

This 2- to 3.5 -inch frog is similar to the common northern leopard frog but differs as follows: often a light spot in center of eardrum; longer, more pointed snout; fewer spots on sides; spots on back more elongate and not rimmed with lighter color; vocal sacs of male are visible externally; and the top of the snout lacks a dark spot.

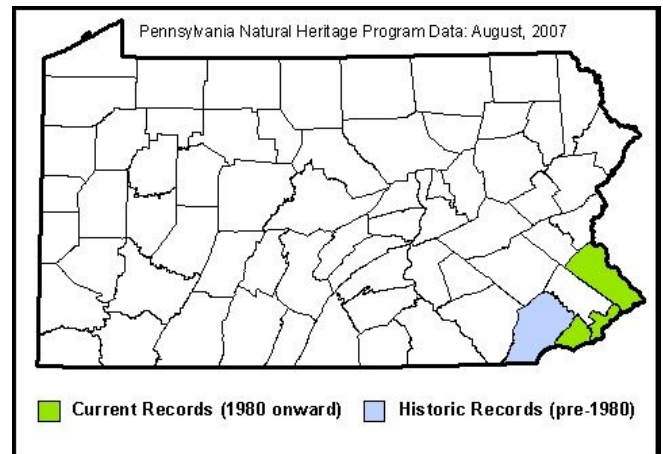
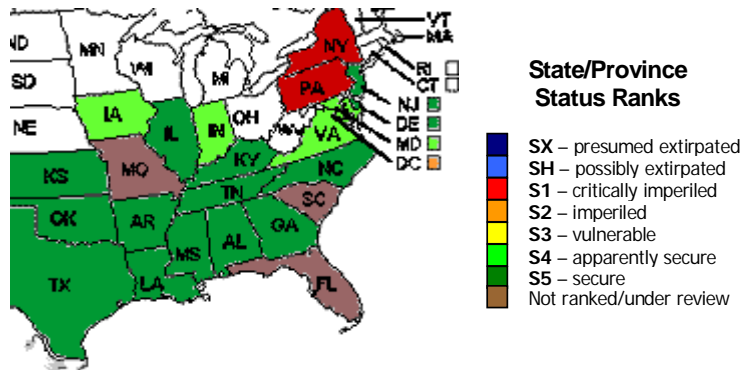
Biology-Natural History

Breeding takes place in early spring, when males may be heard calling between midnight and daylight. The call is a short, guttural trill (pulse rate 13 per second or less, versus 20 per second for the northern leopard frog) followed by two or three clucking sounds. Eggs are laid in flattened clusters attached to submerged plant stems or sticks in shallow water. Eggs hatch within several weeks, and the tadpoles begin transforming to the adult stage, when less than an inch, about three months later. As transformation approaches, the tadpoles' tails become conspicuously blotched with black. Adults may wander from the breeding sites during the summer.



North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Reasons for Being Endangered

The coastal plain leopard frog is endangered because of the loss of its breeding sites to industrial activity.

Management Practices

The Fish and Boat Commission reviews projects in which possible threats to the habitat of this small frog is concerned. The coastal plain habitats required by this species in the north are found only in a limited portion of the state, and potential threats to this habitat are being monitored.

References:

- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: August 20, 2007).



Fact Sheet adapted from: Felbaum, Mitchell, et al. Endangered and Threatened Species of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Wild Resource Conservation Fund, 1995.

