



Threatened Species of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin

# Golden Bell Frog *Litoria raniformis*

**Vulnerable**

## Description

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The Golden Bell Frog is a frog of many names. It is also called the Southern Bell Frog, the Green and Golden Grass Frog, or the Growling Grass Frog because of their loud growling 'crawaark' calls. They are large compared to other frogs (up to 10cm) and have warty green skin with gold and bronze markings. These frogs reside in or near temporary ponds and wetlands or permanent water bodies along the River Murray. They are most active in spring and summer, when they may be seen basking in the sun. In winter they are often found in groups beneath thick beds of reeds on the edges of wetlands.

## Frog cannibals

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The Golden Bell Frog feeds at night, eating small water bugs, beetles, termites and insect larvae. They can even be cannibalistic and eat other frogs! They are opportunistic predators, sitting and waiting to ambush whatever prey comes within reach of a lurching-gulp.

## Metamorphosis

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During spring and summer, the male Golden Bell Frog calls with a repeated 'crawark crawaark crok crok' to attract a mate, while floating in open water or under aquatic vegetation. Females lay jelly-like masses of eggs (up to 4000) typically after a local rain or flooding. Two days later, the tadpoles hatch, and hide in vegetation near the waters' edge where the water is shallower and warmer. The tadpoles metamorphose into frogs in summer or autumn.



## Why are they threatened?

Many factors may be influencing the frog's survival today. Removal of aquatic vegetation and trampling by grazing animals reduces wetland habitat. Weirs have created a series of still 'lakes' along the river, and increased water use has resulted in far fewer floods, limiting opportunities to breed. Introduced Eastern Gambusia may prey on their eggs and tadpoles, and chemical pollution and salinisation probably also affect Golden Bell Frog survival.

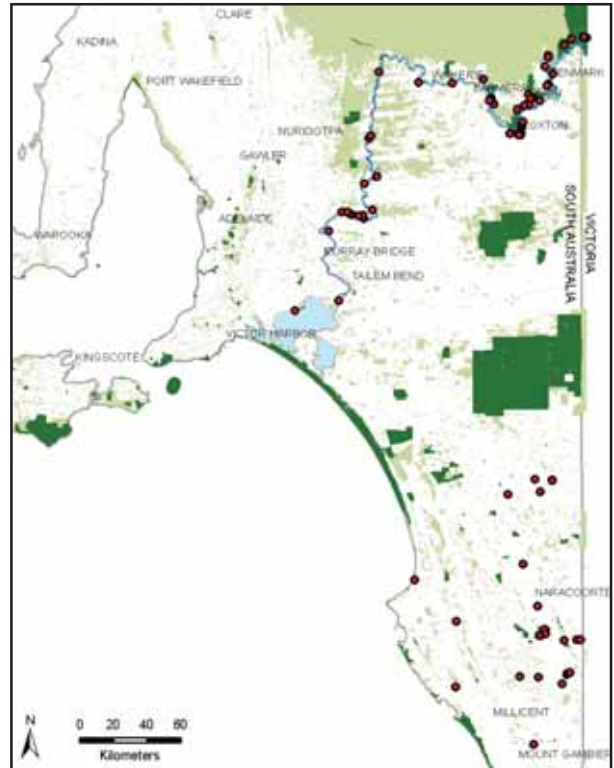
## What are we doing to help?

Research is required to further understand the factors influencing the Golden Bell Frog's decline. Programs such as the EPA frog watch program and frog census helps to improve knowledge of the distribution and abundance of frogs in South Australia. A regional recovery program is helping by implementing recovery actions for the species in the River Murray corridor.



## Where are they?

In South Australia the distribution of the Golden Bell Frog includes several distinct locations along the length of the River Murray and in the lower south-east. It has also been reported in two areas around Adelaide where it is thought to have been introduced.



## What can you do to help?

- Report sightings to the Murraylands Regional Ecologist, Phone 8595 2111. If you see a Bell Frog please do not disturb it – observe it from a distance.
- Consider our frogs and other native aquatic species: please avoid polluting our waterways, removing vegetation or logs from wetlands and collecting tadpoles from wetlands.
- Help with the EPA Frog Census in your local wetlands.

### Further information contact

Biodiversity Conservation Programs  
 Department for Environment and Heritage, Murraylands Region  
 Telephone (08) 8595 2111  
[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)

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The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.