

Tropical Factsheets

More Froggy Facts

Australia's mini-frog

- *Cophixalus hosmeri* is the smallest frog in Australia. The adult male frog is only 11-14mm long - the size of a 5 cent coin - and the newly hatched froglets are even tinier.
- It lives in a small area of the Carbine Tablelands above 940m. It's called the "fast rattling frog" because of the male's call heard on moist summer nights.
- These frogs, like others in the **Microhylid** group, don't spawn in water and there are no free-swimming tadpoles!
- The female lays her eggs in a shallow burrow beneath logs or fallen epiphyte clumps. She produces only 7 to 11 eggs (compared with up to 30 000 for the cane toad) but they are relatively big because each egg has a large yolk to supply the developing frog with plenty of food.
- The parents stay close to the eggs and may even spread an antibacterial and anti-fungal substance on them. The embryo becomes a tadpole — but safely inside the egg. It doesn't hatch until it is a fully developed, tiny frog.



Newly hatched froglets of *Cophixalus hosmeri*

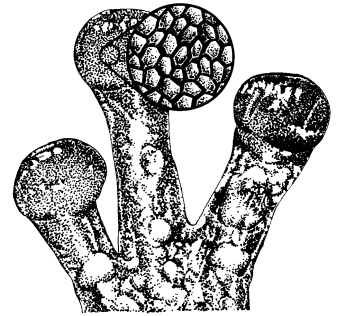
Foam beds

- About 25 of Australia's frog species (such as the Dainty Tree Frog *Litoria gracilentata*) make foam rafts for their eggs.
- The female paddles with her front feet and pushes air bubbles under her body where they mix with spawn.
- This raft keeps the eggs at the surface of the water where it is warmest. Higher temperatures lead to faster development and the tadpoles reach food faster than other species which spawn at the same time.



Sticky toes

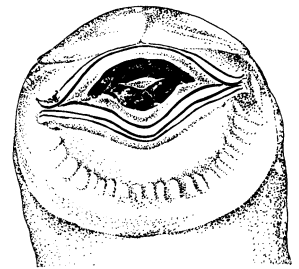
- Why don't tree frogs fall? Climbing frogs have large flat discs on the tips of their toes and fingers. The skin on these pads is made up of interlocking, irregularly shaped cells with narrow gaps between them. These gaps catch on rough surfaces.
- On smooth surfaces extra moisture drains away into the gaps leaving a thin, even film which allows the pad to stick.
- Many frogs have similar skin on their stomachs.



Tree Frog Feet

Sweetlips

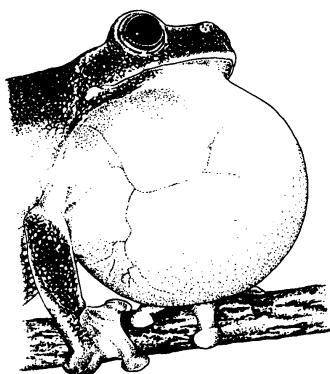
- Some tadpoles which live in fast-flowing water have suckers around their mouths to help them hang onto rocks.
- The thin black lines inside the suckers are rows of fine teeth (there can be up to 15) which scrape algae off rocks. Inside these is a black, horny beak which chop up larger food.



Tadpole Mouth

Loudmouths

- Only male frogs can call. They have an inflatable vocal sac below their jaw. It doesn't make the sound, but acts as a resonance chamber to increase the volume.
- Some sacs inflate externally, but others inflate internally making the whole frog blow up.
- Some frogs have two-part calls which, roughly translated, mean: "Come here girls" and "Get lost other males".



Daintree Tree Frog