

# Neighborhood Wildlife Stewards

*Teaching our Highlands neighbors how to live safely with wildlife and keeping the wildlife wild.*

## ***Pacific Treefrog (Pseudacris regilla)***

From February until July you may hear the sounds of male Pacific treefrogs calling for a mate-kreck-ek or ribbit. Usually their singing occurs in the evening or at night. Though during the breeding season, males may call sporadically during the day, as well.

Living close to the greenbelt in NorthPark, I hear treefrogs calling often in the evening. Last week, while walking around Issaquah Highlands, I heard a treefrog ribbeting nearby. I stopped, listened closely and tried to locate the treefrog. Slowly I moved closer to where I heard the sound and then silence. I never was able to find the treefrog.



Pacific treefrogs are the smallest and most commonly heard frog in the Pacific Northwest. They are adaptable and can be found in rainforests, near sea level and in the mountains as high as 11,000 feet. Adults are only 2 inches long. Unlike most reptiles that change color because of their surrounding background, treefrogs change color, from brown to lime green, in a matter of minutes due to the temperature and amount of moisture in the air. Treefrogs have a distinct black mask that extends from its snout to its shoulder.

In order to breed, treefrogs use ponds, marshes, roadside ditches, even puddles that will eventually dry up. Treefrog populations can fluctuate dramatically. Some years they may not breed at all if the rainy season is too short. Once the male treefrog attracts a female, she will lay 400-750 eggs that the male will externally fertilize. The eggs hatch in 2-3 weeks. These hatchlings quickly turn into tadpoles, with short rounded bodies, bulging eyes and a tail. In 5-6 weeks the tadpoles turn into ½ inch long treefrogs that can now climb onto land. Most treefrogs die at the egg or tadpole stage. If they manage to survive, adult treefrogs live an average of two years in the wild.

When treefrogs are not breeding they inhabit forests, meadows, pastures, gardens and lawns-sometimes several hundred yards from water. Treefrogs are able to travel far from water because they secrete a waxy coating from their skin glands that allows them to remain moist.

All amphibians, frogs being one type, have highly permeable skin that easily absorbs toxins that are used around our homes such as, chemical lawn fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and roof treatment chemicals. Worldwide the population of frogs and amphibians has greatly decreased because of the increase in chemicals used and urban sprawl that has destroyed forests.

### **How to protect Pacific treefrogs in our neighborhoods**

- Use organic lawn treatments.
- Protect buffer areas next to streams, lakes or ponds
- Leave a portion of your grass unmowed, especially areas that adjoin wet areas or forest edges.
- Mow your lawn in hot dry weather when treefrogs are less likely in your grass.
- Walk through your lawn before mowing to let treefrogs jump out of the grass and away from harm.

- Leave leaf litter under your shrubs and trees. It provides cover, moisture and food for amphibians.
- Retain stumps, logs and rock piles. This provides cool moist habitat for amphibians.
- Please do not release amphibians from a pet store. They are not native, will likely die and can introduce new diseases that the native amphibians do not have resistance against.

If you want to attract treefrogs into your yard, establish a natural landscape with native plants. Treefrogs easily colonize new areas. Do not capture a treefrog and move it into your yard as it will likely die because conditions are not right for it to survive.

If you care about the welfare of the wildlife in our area and want to learn more about living safely with the wildlife, contact us about our next meeting [wildlifestewards@gmail.com](mailto:wildlifestewards@gmail.com).

For more information about the wildlife in Issaquah Highlands visit [www.nwwildlifestewards.com](http://www.nwwildlifestewards.com)

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