

# INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

## AFRICAN CLAWED FROG

*(Xenopus laevis)*

### NATIVE RANGE

African Clawed Frogs are native to southern and sub-Saharan Africa.

### DESCRIPTION

African clawed frogs...

- Reach 12 cm long for adult females and 6 cm long for adult males
- Have a flattened body and small head
- Are distinct for their large and webbed hind feet
- Have sharp black claws on three innermost toes of hind feet
- Have slender front feet, with unwebbed toes
- Have eyes on top of head, with a transparent eye cover (no eyelids)
- Are a mottled olive-brown colour on their back with a creamy-white belly
- Are translucent with catfish-like barbels (whiskers) on sides of mouth when tadpoles

### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

African clawed frogs...

- Could predate on and compete with native species in B.C., if introduced
- Are considered pests in other areas where they have been introduced, as they clog up irrigation pipes and invade fish farms
- Are known carriers of parasites that could be harmful to native frog and fish species
- Are known carriers of the chytrid fungus Bd, a disease which has been attributed to the decline in frogs species worldwide

### ARE THEY HERE YET?

**No.** There have been no reports of African Clawed Frogs in B.C. This species has been introduced in the states of California and Arizona.



Photo: Trisha Shears, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0

### PRIMARY IMPACT:

**Predate on and compete with native species in regions where they have been introduced.**

### REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

[www.reportinvasives.ca](http://www.reportinvasives.ca)

### DID YOU KNOW?

African Clawed Frogs were the first vertebrate to be cloned in a laboratory. As well, several African clawed frogs were present on the space shuttle Endeavour (launched in 1992) to see whether they continued to normally reproduce and develop in zero gravity.

# AFRICAN CLAWED FROG

*(Xenopus laevis)*

## BIOLOGY & SPREAD

African Clawed Frogs have been distributed to non-native regions for use in laboratories and as aquarium pets. Their introduction into the wild has been by escaping from, or being released by, laboratories, research facilities, and pet owners.

The spread of African Clawed Frogs is assisted by their abilities to migrate over land and burrow in substrates to avoid difficult environmental conditions. Furthermore, they are highly adaptable to a diverse range of aquatic habitats and able to tolerate high sewage concentrations, cold temperatures, and high saline levels. African Clawed Frogs can live to 10-15 years of age in the wild. They rapidly reach sexually maturity in 6-10 months, and females can produce thousands of eggs at a time, and multiple clutches per season. Their diet is also diverse, as they are able to feed on a variety of prey species, including aquatic insects, fish, amphibians, and even small birds.

## HABITAT

African Clawed Frogs can be found in a variety of aquatic habitats such as rivers, lakes, ponds, marshes, rain pools, and swamps, as well as manmade waters, including reservoirs, dams, flooded pits, ditches, and wells. They prefer stagnant pools and slow flowing streams, appearing to thrive best in eutrophic waters.

## HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not release African clawed frogs into B.C. waters
- Before purchasing a pet frog consider how you are going to take care of it long term
- Contact your local animal rescue centre if you can no longer care for your pet frog
- Raise awareness to avoid the spread of this species into B.C.



Photo: Gary Nafis, CaliforniaHerps

## LOOK-ALIKES

There are no frogs or toads in B.C. that appear similar to African Clawed Frogs as they are extremely unique for their **flattened body**, **clawed toes on hind feet**, and **eyes being positioned on top of head**.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report African clawed frogs, or any other invasive species via the **Report Invasives phone app**, or via the **webform** available on the B.C. Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group website:

[www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)