

Helping Red-Legged Frogs,
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The red-legged frog or *Rana aurora draytonii* is the largest native frog of the Willamette Valley and is in need of our help. The frog populations are declining as a result of habitat loss and displacement by the introduced bullfrogs. Created and natural wetlands have been shown to be good breeding sites for red-legged frogs. If you have wetland habitat on your property, your habitat management and improvement efforts can be a major part of preserving the red-legged frog in the Willamette Valley

Red-legged frogs require both aquatic (wetland) and terrestrial (upland) habitats. Most of the year, red-legged frogs live in moist upland habitats, but they require water to breed. Red-legged frogs breed during the winter, when water is plentiful. The frogs will lay eggs in a variety of permanent and seasonal wetland habitats as long as the water is still or very slow moving, water is present through June, and there is aquatic vegetation for egg attachment. Some known red-legged frog breeding sites include marshes, ponds, sloughs and springs. Wetlands created by beavers and humans are frequently used. Upland sites used by red-legged frogs are variable. The frogs prefer moist forested areas, especially hardwood forests close to water. However, other moist sheltered areas may be used. They have even been observed in muddy culverts and under bridges.

You usually won't hear red-legged frogs sing or croak like other frog species because they call from beneath the water's surface. The most distinctive feature on red-legged frogs is the red coloring on the bottom side of their hind legs and lower abdomen. Red-legged frogs always have cream and black blotches on their sides near their hind legs. The upper surface of the frogs is brown to reddish-brown and usually has markings of small black spots and flecks. Adult frogs range from 2 3/4 to 4 inches in length.

These frogs are very difficult to see because of their cryptic color and their habit of not moving until you are very close to them. You are more likely to see their gelatinous egg-masses which are about the size of an orange. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) can provide additional advice on how you can help red-legged frogs. If you have frogs or frog habitat on your property and want more information, please contact a Wildlife Biologist at the Springfield ODFW office at (541)726-3515

