

Green Treefrog *Hyla cinerea*

The Green Treefrog is probably the most commonly seen and one of the most beautiful of the North American treefrogs. It is more slender than any of the other treefrogs, and the slenderness is accentuated by the lengthwise stripes of metallic white on each side.

The Green Treefrog has great ability to change from light to dark. The color may be nearly black, or it may be so light a greenish yellow that the stripes on the sides are barely distinguishable. It generally tends to match the color of the object it's on, but not always. Color is also affected by temperature.

It is most easily identified by the white "racing stripe" down the side, which frequently has a dark border. The tops and insides of the rear legs are also white and it tends to have whitish "lips" and a pale underside. While it can change color quickly, the stripe stays the same color. In rare occasions, the stripe may be minute or missing.

Adults range in size from 1-1/4 to 2-1/2 inches, and the female is noticeably larger than the male. Toepads are medium sized and observable except when the frog is at rest position. The tympanum is greenish to green-brown.

The rear legs of Green Treefrogs are so long that, except when leaping or resting, it looks as though the frog ought to be very awkward. Those legs enable it to leap great distances to catch prey. A leap of three to four feet is typical, and it can leap a distance of eight to ten feet.

It is gentle and not easily frightened, unlike the similar appearing Squirrel Treefrogs, which go hyper when approached. When aroused, however, the Green Treefrog becomes as active as any other treefrog. When startled, the Green Treefrog usually takes one long jump and then is still. The Squirrel Treefrog, which has yellowish "lips" and no stripe, keeps hopping and hopping.

A nighttime hunter, Green Treefrog food is small insects— mostly crickets, beetles, moths, and caterpillars. It is usually inactive during the day, staying near water and clinging to stems of aquatic plants, trees, and shrubs. It stays relatively close to the ground while the Squirrel Treefrog is higher in trees and tall shrubs.

Green Treefrogs call most frequently during mating season and prior to rain or on humid evenings, especially when the barometric pressure is dropping. This is most often from the start of the rainy season through late October.

When abundant near water, Green Treefrogs are noisiest just before dusk with the chorus being broken by short intervals of silence. A single note is first, and as though a signal, it is taken up and repeated in a prolonged chorus until it ceases as suddenly as it began.

A single male will call approximately 75 times per minute during mating season. The call is a ringing *quenkenkenk*, which from a distance sounds like a cowbell.

Green Treefrogs can breed toward the end of their first year, and breeding takes place in late spring to early summer. They breed in water at least several feet deep in permanent ponds, whereas most other frogs breed in shallow temporary ponds that are created by rainfall.

The female lays small masses of eggs on roots of floating vegetation. The egg mass forms and grows as it absorbs water, eventually appearing jelly-like just below the water's surface.

Eggs hatch in four to six days, and the tadpoles change into frogs in about two months, usually from July through October. The tadpoles grow to about 1-1/2 inches, have very long tails, and are greenish with a cream-colored stripe from nostril to eye.

