

## CARPENTER FROG

*Lithobates virgatipes*



**Order:** Anura  
**Family:** Ranidae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S1  
**U.S. Status:** none  
**FL Status:** none

**Description:** A small-to medium-sized, olive to brown frog with a pair of golden-brown stripes on each side, one starting behind eye and extending along edge of back to groin, the other low on the side. Belly and undersides of hind legs usually mottled with dark brown over white to pale yellow. No raised ridges along edges of back. Webs of rear feet moderately developed, but fourth (longest) toe extends well beyond webbing. Body length, excluding legs, 1.6 - 2.6 in. (4.1 - 6.7 cm). Voice a repeated “pu-tunk,” likened to carpenters hitting nails or boards. Tadpole large, to 3.5 in. (8.9 cm) or more; dark brown above, grading to yellowish on lower sides and belly, with black spots or lines on grayish tail.

**Similar Species:** Most similar frogs within species’ range are larger as adults. Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), pig frog (*R. grylio*), and river frog (*R. heckscheri*) lack light longitudinal stripes, although hints of these may be present in young pig frogs. Bronze frog (*R. clamitans*) has raised ridge running along each edge of back and raised center on eardrum. All four have more extensively webbed hind feet, with toes extending little or not at all beyond webbing.

**Habitat:** Boggy habitats, usually with sphagnum, either in cypress and black tupelo swamps or in open wet prairies and marshes. Water acidic and stained brown by tannins, typically 12 - 30 in. (30 - 76 cm) deep.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** A spring - summer breeder, calls early March - late August; less active in cold weather. Tadpoles overwinter, transform in spring.

**Florida Distribution:** This relatively widespread species reaches the southern end of its range in northeastern Florida, where it is restricted to northern Columbia and Baker counties.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Atlantic Coastal Plain from southern New Jersey to

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northern Florida.

**Conservation Status:** Most Florida habitat occurs on public lands within Osceola National Forest and Pinhook Swamp, which link with Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia.

**Protection and Management:** Maintain water quality and natural characteristics of habitat. Prevent any drainage as well as all sources of pollution.

**References:** Ashton and Ashton 1988a, Bartlett and Bartlett 1999, Conant and Collins 1991, Moler (ed.) 1992, Stevenson 1970.



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