

UPLAND CHORUS FROG

Pseudacris feriarum

Order: Anura
Family: Hylidae
FNAI Ranks: G5/S2S3
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none



Description: Adult body length of this small frog generally is in the range of 2-3.5 cm (0.8-1.4 in). Ground color varies from light tan to dark brown or gray; dark bands extend from the snout through the eyes and eardrums and may extend to the groin. The dorsal pattern consists of three narrow, dark longitudinal stripes that may break into streaks or spots, although in some individuals the stripes are pale, reduced, or even absent. The belly is creamy white and may have dark stippling on the chest. The upper lip usually bears a white line that extends to the shoulder, and there may be a dark, sometimes triangular figure between the eyes. The tibia bears narrow to indistinct bands and is about half of total body length. Although chorus frogs are in the treefrog family Hylidae, toepads are barely perceptible, and webbing between toes is minimal. Voice is a clicking, rising trill (sound of thumb running across teeth of a comb). The tadpole is mostly dark with gold speckling on the dorsum, but with a lighter belly, and the snout is rounded in side view; the tail fin is higher dorsally than ventrally and may bear small, dark flecks (Jensen et al. 2008, Powell et al. 2016, Krysko et al. 2019, Dodd 2023).

Similar Species: This is one of a dozen small species of Florida frogs and toads whose adult size is generally in the range of 3 cm (1.2 in) or less. Most of these are in the Hylidae; the five species of *Pseudacris* and two species of *Acris* (cricket frogs) are characterized by very small toepads indicative of their non-arboreal lifestyles. The southern chorus frog (*P. nigrita*) occurs throughout the Panhandle and has a more pointed snout, dorsal markings that contrast strongly with the background, broad bands on the tibias, and a slower-pulsed call than *P. feriarum*. The ornate chorus frog (*P. ornata*) has light-bordered, dark brown to black spots along the lower sides and near the groin. The little grass frog (*P. ocularis*) is tiny (to 1.5 cm = 0.6 in) and lacks white lip lines, and the spring peeper (*P. crucifer*) usually has markings forming an X on the back. Cricket frogs (*Acris*) are small, have granular to warty skin, dark stripes on the thighs but usually not on the backs, and typically bear a dark triangle between the eyes (Jensen et al. 2008, Powell et al. 2016, Krysko et al. 2019, Dodd 2023).

Habitat: In Florida, the “upland” chorus frog is actually a lowland frog, as it inhabits bottomland forest, floodplain swamp, other wet forests, and adjacent fields. Breeding occurs in ephemeral wetlands, typically grassy marshes but occasionally wooded pools and cypress swamps (Krysko et al. 2019, Dodd 2023).

Seasonal Occurrence: Like many small frogs, *P. feriarum* is present year-round but inconspicuous outside of breeding (calling) season, which occurs during winter (Dec-Mar). Tadpoles typically metamorphose in 2-4 months if hydroperiod permits (Dodd 2023).

Florida Distribution: The range of the upland chorus frog extends into Florida along the Apalachicola River floodplain. There are also older records in Okaloosa County within the Yellow River drainage, but presence in the area needs updated verification (Krysko et al. 2019).

Range-wide Distribution: *Pseudacris feriarum* is principally a frog of the southeastern U.S., including parts of all Gulf Coastal states from Mississippi to Maryland, and extending inland as far as southeastern Missouri, southern Kentucky, and south-central Pennsylvania. Its range abuts other species of *Pseudacris* to the north and west (Powell et al. 2016, Krysko et al. 2019, Dodd 2023).

Conservation Status: There are no known significant threats to this species in Florida, where much of the occupied habitat occurs on public conservation lands. However, diseases such as ranavirus pose a potential threat if introduced into populations (Dodd 2023).

Protection and Management: Wetland and adjacent upland habitats within the range of this frog need to be protected from destructive disturbances along transportation and power corridors as well as from sources of pollution (including upstream). Populations should be monitored periodically for signs of disease.

References: Jensen et al. 2008, Krysko et al. 2019, Powell et al. 2016, Dodd 2023.



Adults, Apalachicola River floodplain, Florida. © D. Bruce Means.



Adult, Dade County, Georgia. © John B. Jensen.



Tadpole, Banks County, Georgia. © John B. Jensen.