

**Scientific Name:** *Rana pipiens*  
**Common Name:** Northern Leopard Frog

**Element ID:** 8711

## Taxonomy

**Taxonomic class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Family Name:** Ranidae

**Genus Name:** Rana

**Family Common Name:**

**Genus Common Name:**

## Taxonomic Comments:

Much published information on "*Rana pipiens*" actually pertains to other species that have been described or recognized since the early 1970s.

Hoffman and Blouin (2004) used mtDNA data to develop a hypothesis regarding the evolutionary history and phylogeography of *Rana pipiens*.

## Ranking and Protection Status

**Global Rank:** G5

**COSEWIC Status:** Special Concern

**Provincial Rank:** S3

**Provincial Protection Status:** Special Concern Category

## Diagnostic Characteristics

### Identification Comments:

The Northern Leopard Frog is a slim, long-legged green or brown frog with two or three rows of irregularly placed dark spots between prominent, light-coloured dorsolateral ridges. Spots are large, rounded and light-edged; adjacent spots may run together; there are numerous additional rounded spots on the sides. They also lack a pale spot in the center of the tympanum (ear), have a light line on the upper jaw and a white or pale coloured belly. Dorsal spots may be reduced or absent in young frogs (Stebbins 1985).

Northern Leopard Frogs can grow to over 10 cm body length but this is quite rare. Adults are usually 5-8 cm. "The male's call is a low snore followed by several low grunts and does not carry very far. Sometimes it sounds like a finger rubbed on a wet balloon" (CARCNET-lfrog 2004).

In SK, the Northern Leopard Frog occurs in muskegs north of Lake Athabasca and Black Lake in the Tazin Lake Upland Ecoregion (Uranium City Upland Landscape Area), southward to the Mixed Grasslands Ecoregion (Climax Plain Landscape Area) where it occurs in wetlands and coulees. Its range is not believed to be continuous across the province; the majority of occurrences are documented south of the Aspen Parkland Ecoregion.



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### Lookalikes:

Habitat Information and Comments

**Habitat Comments:**

"Leopard Frogs occupy a wide range of habitats from prairie to woodland to tundra. They are often found a considerable distance from open water" (CARCNET-lfrog 2004).

**Threat Comments:**

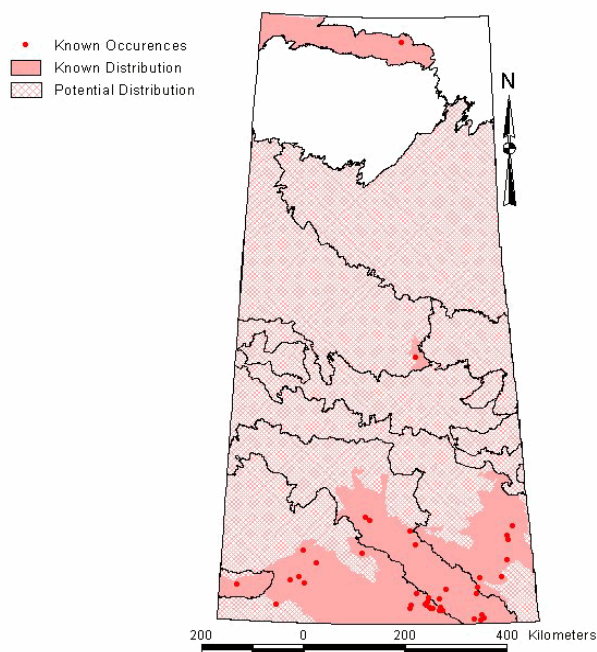
Dispersal may be limited by habitat fragmentation as individuals are unable to move through crop land to permanent wetland areas essential for hibernation. The impacts of grazing on riparian areas and fish stocking are detrimental to their survival as well. Although no commercial trade of amphibians exists in Saskatchewan, their use as fish bait may also diminish local populations.

Threats may be moderate to extreme in localized areas. In agricultural areas, possible threats include wetland degradation, such as drainage and infilling. Drainage and infilling leads to reduced permanency of wetlands. Water bodies are unable to hold water for substantial periods of time thus becoming amphibian population sinks. Nutrient loading from livestock grazing leads to amphibian die offs in localized instances.

**Protection Comments:**

Monitoring of aquaculture operations to assess potential impacts of viral infection on populations.

Saskatchewan Distribution



**Rural Municipalities:**

No Subnational Data

**Range Extent Comments:**

Currently no range extent comments

Phenology

**Time of Year**

**Phenology**

Currently no phenology for this species.

**Phenology Comments:**

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NLFR generally vocalize between mid-late April and early June, however calls can usually be heard in April just before the ice has completely melted from many waterbodies. Timing of reproductive events (calling and egg mass deposition) is highly dependent upon environmental conditions, especially air and water temperature, but also includes photoperiod, barometric pressure and latitude. Activity levels may increase with declining barometric pressure. Breeding activity can be depressed when ambient temperature drops below 10 C, resulting in multiple mating periods. It is important to note that breeding may last only several days or may occur intermittently over several weeks, depending on local conditions. (Kendall 2002)  
<br><br>"Winters are spent on the bottom of waterbodies that do not freeze solid. In many areas Leopard Frogs hibernate in different ponds from where they breed" (CARCNET-lfrog 2004). In Saskatchewan, wintering (January) inactive (seen burrowed into the mud) and slightly active (swimming slowly) leopard frogs were observed in an open spring fed water hole in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. (McAdam and Nagle-Hisey, 1998; A98MCA00SKCA)

#### Reproduction and Ecology Comments

##### Reproduction Comments:

Currently no reproduction notes for this species.

##### Management Needs:

None at present.

##### Management Comments:

Currently no management guidelines for this species.

#### References

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