

ATLAS OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN EUROPE.



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Distribution

The bullfrog originated east of the Rocky Mountains in North America. The species is now acclimatized west of the Rocky Mountains, in Northern Mexico, and in Cuba, Jamaica, Bermuda, Hawaii and Japan. In 1932 the species was officially introduced in Italy (ditches of the Corte Brusca farm in Bigarello, province of Mantua). Introductions continued at least until 1937. In the post-war period, the presence of American bullfrogs was already evident in other parts of the Mantovano area. From 1956 the increase was slow, but progressive, and extended to the Valli Grandi Veronesi and to Ostigliese (province of Verona). In the sixties, specimens were occasionally found near Rovigo. The increased population in Pianura Padana could have been indirectly encouraged by the work of F. Alessi from Castel d’Ario (Province of Mantua), who restocked the Venetian fishing valley with fish (and accidentally also with big tadpoles of *R. catesbeiana*) caught in the Mantovano and Veronese rice-fields. The ’s bullfrog increase is not restricted to the Pianura Padana Veneta ; beginning in 1967, several breeding attempts were made in Correzzo (Verona, in 1967-69), in Carpi (Modena, from 1968), in the Institute for Human Physiology of Pavia University (where the first example dates back to 1948), in Toscana between Firenze and Pistoia, in San Rossore (Pisa), near Pomezia and in Maccarese lakes (Roma), between Cameri and Bellinzago Novarese (Novara, from 1983 to 1986), and in San Firmino di Cellerengo (Asti, from 1983). At present it appears to be firmly acclimatized, at least in Lombardy (province of Mantua), Veneto (provinces of Rovigo and Verona), Emilia Romagna (provinces of Reggio Emilia, Modena and Bologna), Tuscany (provinces of Pistoia and Florence), and perhaps Latium (province of Rome).

Outside Italy, the reproduction of bullfrogs has been recorded in the Netherlands, namely in a large garden pond in the city of Breda. The bullfrog is spreading progressively in the region of Bordeaux, Southwestern France, where it was observed for the first time in 1990. A colony of bullfrogs existed in Surrey (Britain) around 1900. It is almost certain that the bullfrog will in the future acclimatize itself elsewhere in Europe as it is widely imported in the continent for trade in pet shops and for culinary purposes.

Altitudinal distribution

The species occurs from sea-level up to 321 m a.s.l. (Cellerengo, Torino), but most of the Italian localities with *R. catesbeiana* are found between 10 and 50 m. In its native country it lives both at low altitudes and in the mountains.

Population status and conservation problems

In the case of the bullfrog the “conservation problem” is inverted, as it should be desirable to eliminate this species where acclimatized. *R. catesbeiana* has a wide ecological valence and a wide trophical spectrum. It feeds on snakes, turtles, mammals and birds and particularly on amphibians. It is too early, however, to estimate the extent of the damage suffered by native vertebrates, because there are no quantitative data available.

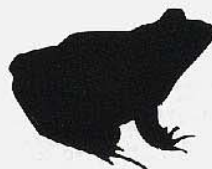
Special references

DISTRIBUTION : Lanza (1962), Albertini (1970 a, 1970 b, 1983), Vanni & Lanza (1978), Bury & Whelan (1984), Andreone *et al.* (1987), Albertini & Lanza (1988), Stumpel (1992), Touratier (1992 a, 1992 b).

SYSTEMATICS : Lanza (1983 a), Bury & Whelan (1984).

BIOLOGY : Willis *et al.* (1956), Cecil & Just (1979), Lanza (1983 a), Bagnoli & Albertini (1984), Bury & Whelan (1984).

B. LANZA & V. FERRI



Total number of squares :	18	0,39 %		
◦ before 1970 :	0		• after 1970 :	0
* extinct :	0		▲ introduced :	18 100,00 %

Rana catesbeiana Shaw, 1802

Main synonyms

Rana mugiens Merrem, 1820 ; *Rana scapularis* Harlan, 1825 ; *Rana conspersa* Le Conte, 1855.

Common names

GB : American bullfrog ; F : Grenouille-taureau ; D : Amerikanischer Ochsenfrosch ; E : Rana toro ; I : Rana toro.

Terra typica

South Carolina, U.S.A. (restricted to the vicinity of Charleston).

European subspecies

None.

