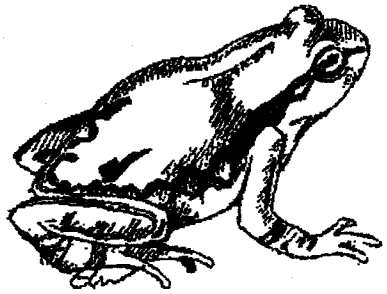
Mountain Treefrog

Hyla eximia
Family Hylidae



Global Rank: G4
State Rank: S2 (NM); S4 (AZ)

Distribution: Extends from the mountains of central Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, with an isolated population in the Huachuca Mountains of Cochise County, Arizona. Occurs in the Sierra Madre Occidental of northwestern Mexico as far south as Guerrero. Ranges from around 3,000 ft. (910 m.) to 9,500 ft. (2,900 m.) in elevation.

Current range of the mountain treefrog

Description: Adults reach up to 2 1/4 in. (5.6 cm.) in snout-vent length. They are green to brownish above with a dark line extending from the snout posteriorly through the eye onto the side of the body where it breaks into several segments. The posterior surfaces of the femur and groin are orange or gold with a greenish tinge. Adult males have dull greenish and tan throats compared to whitish in females. Toe pads are distinct, but small. Males are slightly smaller than females. The voice is a vibrant, repeated *crreck* or *prreep* speeding up or rising near the end. Tails of tadpoles are half to two-thirds of the total body length, and eyes are slightly displaced dorsally and cannot

be seen from the ventral view. Dark melanophores are scattered over the body and base of tail above and mostly free of pigmentation below.

Reproduction: Breeding occurs in June through August during and after rains. Small, loose clusters of eggs are laid the day after breeding and attached to vegetation in shallow water. Tadpoles undergo metamorphosis between mid-September and mid-October.

Food: Known to feed on beetles (including bark beetles), spiders, earthworms, flies, and grass particles.

Habits: These small frogs occur at high elevations in coniferous forests of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. They occur along small streams, in wet meadows and cienegas, and in roadside ditches with temporary water. They are believed to climb to considerable heights in trees.

Management Implications: The species is relatively common in its preferred habitat. It appears to be fairly toxic in that there are several reports of severe burning of the eyes after handling the treefrogs. Bark beetles are well known pests in pine forests, and mountain treefrogs may help to control them.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Degenhardt, W.G., C.W. Painter, and A.H. Price. 1996. Amphibians and reptiles of New Mexico. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM.