

Tarahumara Frog

Rana tarahumarae

Family Ranidae



Global Rank: G3

State Rank: SX (AZ)

Distribution: Known from the Pajarito, Tumacacori, and Santa Rita Mountains of south-central Arizona (extremely rare or extinct). South in Sierra Madre Occidental to Sinaloa, Mexico. Ranges from about 1,500 ft. (460 m.) to 6,100 ft. (1,800 m.) in elevation.

Description: Reaches to 4 1/2 in. (10.6 cm.) in snout-vent length. Coloration is rust, olive, or dark brown above, with dark spots that often have light centers. Prominent dark banding on the hind legs. White to cream coloration below, often clouded with dusky. No mask or light jaw stripe. The dorsolateral folds and eardrums indistinct, with the eardrum frequently granular. Adult males have a swollen and darkened thumb base.

Reproduction: In Arizona, known to breed in July through August, during the period of summer rains.

Food: Diet is unknown, except that the frog probably eats a wide variety of insects and invertebrates.



Current range of the Tarahumara frog

Habits: A species of the Sierra Madre Occidental, barely entering the United States in the mountains of extreme southern Arizona. Ranges from oak woodland into pine forests, along rocky, gravelly stream courses. This "plunge pool" frog is usually found within a jump or two of water, on the banks of pools, under stones, in niches in cliffs, or sitting in riffles. While it apparently prefers moving water, individuals gather at quiet pools and springs in dry weather.

Management Implications: Extremely rare or absent throughout its former range in Arizona. Replaced by bullfrogs in parts of its range.

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.