



BULLFROG

FAMILY : RANIDAE
GENUS : PYXICEPHALUS
LATIN : *Pyxicephalus adspersus*

The bullfrog's distribution covers a wide range of Southern Africa at low and high altitudes. They live in open grassland or bush country.

They are squat thickset frogs with horny protrusions on the heels which aid them to burrow backwards into the soil. They have strong jaws with two bony teeth on the bottom jaw and a bite can leave large dents in a broom handle. Their tongues are attached to the front of the mouth and are flipped forward when catching food. The bullfrog is carnivorous and will eat anything that moves including mice, birds, lizards, snakes and other frogs. It is interesting to note that they will only eat anything that moves, if it's prey freezes, the frog will not touch it. They will also eat insects, scorpions, crabs and snails. Their colour is green to olive brown with darker spots and markings. They have a loud guttural grunt and roar or bellow like cattle. When large numbers call together the noise is terrific and can be heard from a great distance. The female is slightly smaller than the male and has no voice at all. Bullfrogs will attack any intruders and are quite aggressive. Males can grow to an enormous size, approx 20cm long and up to 35cm wide. They take about two years to mature, and it is said that Kalahari bushmen eat bullfrogs as a great delicacy.

Three to four thousand eggs are laid in shallow water, each egg approx 2mm in diameter. The eggs are encased in a sticky jelly which soon picks up dust and dirt and becomes almost invisible. The eggs hatch after about two days and become tadpoles with wide gaping mouths. They quickly grow into young frogs about 2cm long and leave the water about 18 days after hatching. These young frogs very often eat each other at this time.

Frogs are nocturnal and congregate at night in large numbers in pools, dams or vleis to breed. In autumn they burrow into the ground using the projections on their heels, they then hibernate during the winter, coming out when heavy rain wets the soil. This can happen so quickly that before the storm is over, there might be dozens of frogs hopping around.

Frogs breathe through their lungs but also through the skin and because of this, their skin must always be moist. During hibernation, they can slow down their lung activity almost completely, just taking in enough oxygen through the skin.

Without frogs, our veld, farms and gardens would be overrun by insects, beetles, caterpillars and grasshoppers. What useful friends they are.

HARTBEESPOORT DAM SNAKE AND ANIMAL PARK BRULPADDAS



FAMILIE	:	RANIDAE
GENUS	:	PYXICEPHALUS
LATYN	:	Pyxicephalus adpersus
VERSPREIDING	:	Oosterlike Kaapprovinsie, OVS, Zululand, Transvaal, Botswana tot Sudan

Brulpaddas lewe in die grasvelde sowel as die bosveld. Hulle is kort, dik paddas met horingagtige uitgroeisels op hulle hakke wat hulle instaat stel om agteruit in die grond to grawe. Hulle het sterk kake met twee tande op die onderste kaak wat so hard kan byt dat dit twee merke op 'n besemstok kan laat. Die tonge, wat vas is aan die voorste deel van die mond, kan vooruit skiet om hulle kos te vang. Hulle sal enigiets vreet wat naby is soos klein soogdiertjies, voeltjies, akkedisse, slangetjies, en ander paddas. Dit is interessant dat hulle alleenlik prooi vang wat beweeg. Hulle vreet ook slakke, krappe, insekte en skerpioene. Hulle kleur is groen tot olyfbruin met donkerder kolle en soms 'n streep op die rug af. Die jonger brulpaddas is 'n ligter groen kleur met 'n bleekgroen streep op die rug. Die vel het baie voue wat orals op die lyf voorkom. Hulle het 'n harde brom kwaak geluid soos die gebulk van 'n bees en as 'n klomp gelyk kwaak kan jy die geluid ver hoor. Die wyfies is kleiner as die mannetjie en kan geen geluid maak nie. 'nBrulpadda is nogal aggressief as hy bedreig word. Die mannetjie word baie groot tot 20 cm lank en 35 cm breed en hulle word 15 tot 20 jaar oud. Hulle neem omtrent 2 jaar om uit to groei afhangende van hoeveel kos beskikbaar is om to eet. Daar word vertel dat die Boesmans brulpaddas eet.

Drie tot vier duisend eiers word in vlak water gele in so 'n taaiërige jellie wat dan gou stof opneem en byna onsigbaar word. Die eiers broei uit na 2 of 3 dae en word paddavissies met groot bekke. Hulle word gou groot en word klein paddatjies wat die water na omtrent 18 dae verlaat. Hulle sal soms mekaar opvreet.

Paddas haal asem deur hulle longe net soos ons, maar kan ook asem haal deur hulle vel en daarom moet die vel altyd nat wees. Wanneer hulle in 'n winterslaap gaan word die asemhaling deur die longe amper gestaak omdat daar genoeg suurstof deur die vel kom. Hulle is nag diere wat snags in damme, poele water of in die vlei bymekaarkom. Gedurende herfs grawe hulle hulself onder die grond in en gaan in 'n winterslaap totdat die eerste somerreens val. Dan kom hulle uit en soms is daar baie wat rondspring nog voordat die reen verby is.

Hulle is goeie vriende van ons omdat hulle die insekte, wurms, torre en sprinkane vang. Sonder hulle sal die veld en tuine wemel van wurms, insekte ens.