

# Pine Barrens Treefrog

## *Hyla andersonii*



These beautiful little frogs are only an inch and a half long when fully grown. Each frog looks as though it was hand-painted with glossy green and brown paint. The underside of the legs and flank are often bright yellow. These frogs can be found in acidic bogs, swamps and other wetlands. They feed on small insects and other invertebrates. They breed in the late spring, laying eggs and attaching them to plants on the bottom. Eggs of Pine Barrens Treefrogs hatch in about three days into dark green tadpoles. Tadpoles grow to about an inch and a half long before they transform into young frogs. The range of this frog includes the eastern U.S., with populations living in Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and New Jersey. Pine Barrens Treefrogs can be tough to locate because they spend much of their time under cover. They belong to a

group of animals that is often referred to as part of the “hidden biodiversity” of the natural world.

Researchers use special traps and techniques to determine whether these “hidden species” are present. One technique is to find wetlands that are suitable as breeding sites for this species, and then listen for calling male treefrogs on warm, rainy nights in the late spring. Their call consists of 15-20 rapid nasal “quanks.” Because male frogs in general devote a lot of energy to calling, the resulting frog “chorus” can almost be deafening at times. SREL researchers use “frogloggers” to tape frog choruses. Frogloggers are modified tape recorders, designed to record short segments of sound footage every hour, allowing researchers to document which species of frogs occupy particular wetland habitats. This research technique, in conjunction with other methods of sampling, helps scientists to determine what role amphibians play in wetland ecosystems.

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Photos by David Scott