

Calling survey for the Blanchard's Cricket Frog

*(Acris crepitans blanchardi)* in

Tripp County, South Dakota

by

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## **Background & Discussion**

Specimens of the Cricket Frog had been collected in Tripp County in the 1960's along the Keyapaha River (SD Heritage Database). In 1999 I heard cricket frogs in Nebraska. The location was along US Hwy 183, in Holt Creek (a tributary of the Keyapaha River), a few miles south of the South Dakota Border. Historically, the cricket frogs were present from south central to the extreme southeast regions of South Dakota. The cricket frog appeared to prefer perennial rivers and streams in South Dakota. The cricket frog breeds from late May into July.

## **Methods & Materials**

I drove a route along the Keyapaha River from US Hwy 183 to the old town of Keyapaha, South Dakota. I marked wetlands along the Keyapaha River and its tributaries. I chose 15 stations along the Keyapaha River and its tributaries. In addition, I located stations at Dog Ear Lake and Little Dog Ear Lake, as they are natural lakes and I thought the cricket frog may be present. I also located a station in Nebraska where I heard cricket frogs in 1999. My goal was to use this station as a control. I theorized when I heard cricket frogs calling at this station, they should be calling at my South Dakota stations.

I drove this route 6 times, starting May 12th and ending July 7th, 2001. I started my survey at dark when amphibian species were calling vigorously. At each station I listened for 10 minutes. I noted the species present at each site. I utilized a cassette tape of The Calls of Frogs and Toads for identification.

In September 2001 I checked at many bridge locations along my route. I thought if the cricket frogs were present and had a successful hatch I would be able to find live specimens.

### Results & Conclusions

The following is a list of species found during my calling survey:

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Bullfrog	<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipens</i>
Chorus Frog	<i>Pseudacris triseriata sp.</i>
Great Plains Toad	<i>Bufo cognatus</i>
Woodhouse's Toad	<i>Bufo woodhousei</i>

The calling survey yielded the following results. Woodhouse's Toad and Chorus Frogs were numerous and heard at all stations. Great Plains Toad were heard only at 3 stations, but abundant where present. Bullfrog's were present in low numbers at 4 stations. Northern Leopard Frogs were common at 11 stations.

My survey failed to find any evidence of cricket frogs in Tripp County, South Dakota. I thought during my survey that maybe because it was a cold late spring, that I started too early. But, the other amphibian species were calling and I never heard the cricket frogs in June or July. I was also greatly disappointed with my Control Site in Nebraska. Although I heard cricket frogs there 2 years ago, I failed to hear any at that site during my survey. My September search only detected Northern Leopard Frogs and Bullfrogs.

My conclusions are that the cricket frog is no longer present in this area , or is in such low numbers that it escaped detection. Whether environmental or climatic factors played a role in the cricket frogs absence I do not know. Bullfrogs were present in the stations that were historic cricket frog collection sites. It has been documented that Bullfrogs predate on other frog species. Thus, Bullfrogs could have played a role in their absence.