ANIMAL LEARNING CENTER · NOT CURRENTLY AT THE ZOO

PIXIE FROG

Pyxicephalus adspersus · *also called the African bullfrog*

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Amphibian — frog
NATIVE REGION	Sub-Saharan Africa, from Somalia and Nigeria south to South Africa
HABITAT	Grasslands and savannas with seasonal rain pools
DIET	Carnivore
SIZE	Males roughly 8–10 in; females about half that
WEIGHT	Males over 2 lb, large ones up to about 4 lb
LIFESPAN	About 20 years in the wild; up to 35–40 in human care
STATUS	Least Concern (IUCN)



A Pixie frog sitting in shallow water.

Did you know?

- The name comes from the first part of its scientific name, Pyxicephalus, not from its size. It is one of the largest frogs in the world.
- A male can be more than twice the size of a female, the reverse of the pattern in many frogs.
- A female can lay about 4,000 eggs at one time in a temporary rain pool. The eggs hatch in about two days.
- A guarding male may dig a channel to lead his tadpoles from a drying pool toward deeper water.
- Three bony points on the lower jaw, called odontodes, work like big teeth to grip prey.

Words to know

Amphibian: an animal, like a frog, that usually starts life in water and lives on land as an adult.
Estivation: a resting state that helps an animal survive hot, dry weather. Pixie frogs estivate underground inside a cocoon of shed skin.
Carnivore: an animal that eats other animals.
Tadpole: the young, swimming stage of a frog.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Think about it

1. How does a cocoon of shed skin help a Pixie frog survive a long dry season?
2. Why do you think Pixie frog tadpoles grow so fast?
3. How is estivation different from winter hibernation?
4. Pixie frogs swallow prey whole. What decides what a Pixie frog can eat?
5. Compare the Pixie frog with the American bullfrog found in Maryland ponds. How are their homes different?

Draw it

In the box below, draw a Pixie frog's year: a rain pool full of tadpoles, the frog hunting in the grass, and the frog sealed in its cocoon underground during the dry season. Label each part.

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **3-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3 · 4-LS1-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.3.A · 3.1.3.G · 3.1.4.A**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/reptiles/pixie-frog/ · **Sources:** Animal Diversity Web (University of Michigan); Virginia Zoo; Potawatomi Zoo.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 3-LS1-1 (3.1.3.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G) · 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A)
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ANIMAL LEARNING CENTER · RESEARCH WORKSHEET

PIXIE FROG

Before and after your research

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Before you research · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the pixie frog live?
Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?
☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.
☐ Amphibian ☐ Estivation ☐ Carnivore ☐ Tadpole

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

4. My question: one thing I want to find out about the pixie frog.

While you research

Read the animal page:
plumptonparkzoo.org/reptiles/pixie-frog/

Write two facts you did not know before.

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your research · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Sub-Saharan Africa, from Somalia and Nigeria south to South Africa. Was your guess right?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Carnivore; it swallows its prey whole. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.
- Why do you think Pixie frog tadpoles grow so fast?
- How is estivation different from winter hibernation?

4. Exit ticket.
One thing I learned: _____
One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT
Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/reptiles/pixie-frog/ · Fact sheet page 1 has the fast facts, map and vocabulary this page refers to.
Grades 3–4 · Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **3-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3 · 4-LS1-1** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.3.A · 3.1.3.G · 3.1.4.A**
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