

# Sandhill frog

*Arenophryne rotunda*

## Fact sheet

### SHARK BAY World Heritage

#### Description



The thick-set, ball-shaped sandhill frog is 26-33mm long, has a rounded head and short legs and toes. The loose skin around the hind legs is quite baggy. The frog's colour varies from off-white to cream with green, brown or brick-red speckles, but it can darken rapidly to grey or brown. Females are larger than males. Unlike most other frogs, the sandhill frog crawls, one leg after the other, rather than hopping.

#### Diet and habitat



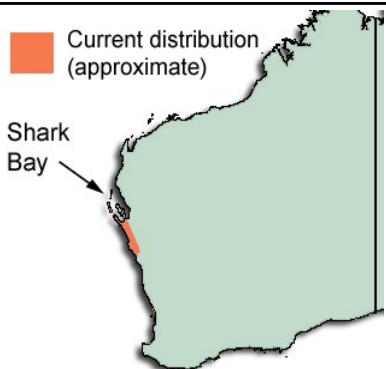
Sandhill frogs avoid the heat of the day by burrowing head-first into the sand to a depth of 10–30 cm. When buried in damp sand, these frogs replenish moisture reserves by absorbing fresh water through their skin. They emerge to feed on ants and other insects after rain, or when there's dew. Sandhill frogs may crawl up to 30 metres searching for food.

#### Breeding



Sandhill frogs attract mates with squelching calls. Unlike most frogs, they do not need free standing water for breeding and there is no tadpole stage. Instead, sandhill frogs lay clutches of large, creamy-white eggs about 80cm below the surface. Tadpoles develop into tiny frogs within the egg before hatching and emerging from the burrow approximately 9 weeks later.

#### Distribution



The sandhill frog spends most of its life buried in the sand on the dunes of Edel Land and Dirk Hartog Island. Discovery of the frog in 2005 near Nanga Bay extended the species' known range northward. It has also been found inland through the Zuytdorp Nature Reserve and south to Kalbarri.

#### Status

The sandhill frog appears to be common over its range, although that is limited to a thin strip of coastline. Climate changes, in particular drought, are possibly the greatest threat.

