

Cacopus (Burrowing frog)

Classification :

Kingdom : Animalia
Phylum : Chordata
Class : Amphibia
Order : Anura
Family : Dicroglossidae
Genus : Cacopus



For further details, [Link](#)

Characteristics :

- Cacopus burrowing frogs are characterized by their stout, stoutly built bodies, small size, and burrowing lifestyle, which involves spending extended periods underground to avoid predators and unfavorable conditions.
- **Size & Shape:** A large, slow-moving frog reaching up to 10 cm in body length, with a robust, globular body.
- **Skin:** Granular and warty, with some larger warts on the flanks that may be creamy white or yellow.
- **Eyes:** Prominent, with a vertically elliptical pupil and a silvery iris.
- **Limbs:** Muscular hind limbs with greatly enlarged, spade-shaped metatarsal tubercles on the feet, essential for digging. Males have enlarged forearms and large black spines on their first finger during breeding season.
- **Coloration:** Varies from steely blue-grey to black on the back and limbs, with paler sides, and a white or bluish-white belly.

Reproduction

- **Breeding Season:** Emerges during the monsoon rains, typically from May to July, to breed in temporary pools.
- **Vocalization:** Males produce a distinct, low-pitched, owl-like "oop oop oop" call to attract females, distending a large, balloon-like vocal sac during calling.

- **Eggs & Tadpoles:** After mating, females lay eggs, and the tadpoles are large and dark blue to black.

Distinguishing Features

- Its lack of parotoid glands and vertical pupils distinguishes it from the Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*).
- The presence of a large, spade-shaped metatarsal tubercle on the foot is a key characteristic for burrowing, differentiating it from species without such adaptations.

Habit and Habitat

- **Burrowing Lifestyle:** The frog's primary defense and survival mechanism is burrowing feet-first into the ground to escape hot, dry conditions.
- **Nocturnal Activity:** It is most active at night, especially after thunderstorms or heavy rainfall, when it emerges to forage and breed.
- **Habitat Preferences:** It lives in various habitats, including dry regions with leafy litter, rocky areas, and woodlands, and is often found near slow-moving water sources or pools.
- **Breeding Grounds:** Breeding occurs in temporary pools, soaks, ditches, and slow-flowing streams, often in burrows dug by the males.

Interesting Facts

- **Water Storage:** Its bladder is capable of storing a large percentage of its body weight in water, a vital adaptation for surviving long periods in dry conditions.
- **Cocoon Formation:** To minimize water loss, it secretes a cocoon of dead skin cells around its body before going into extended periods of inactivity underground.
- **Diet:** The Indian burrowing frog is a generalist carnivore, consuming a variety of invertebrates such as ants, beetles, spiders, and centipedes.
- **Appearance:** The frog is relatively stout and stubby, with a short head and swollen occiput.

Unique Character

- **Shovel-Shaped Metatarsal Tubercle:** The most striking feature is the enlarged, shovel-shaped, sharp-edged inner metatarsal tubercle on its hind feet, which acts as a powerful "shovel" for digging.
- **Generalist and Opportunist:** Its generalist diet and ability to adapt to various environments show a flexible and opportunistic nature.
- **Rapid Tadpole Development:** The frog's ability to produce very large tadpoles and the tadpoles' ability to develop quickly in temporary pools are key adaptations to its environment.