

**Grassland and Savanna Protocol
for
Incidental Take Permit and Authorization
Blanchard's Cricket Frog (*Acris blanchardi*)**

Note

If carrying out a given protocol is not feasible, or multiple listed species in a given management area pose conflicts, contact the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) at 608-264-6057. Staff in NHC will work with Science Services staff, species experts and managers to establish an acceptable protocol for a given site that will allow for incidental take without further legal consultation or public notice.

I. Species Background Information

A. Status

State Status: Endangered

Wisconsin Range: The cricket frog was historically present in the southern half of Wisconsin but has declined over the past several decades and now is primarily found in Grant, Iowa, Lafayette and Vernon counties in southwestern Wisconsin.

Please note: This protocol only needs to be followed for projects requiring a broad incidental take permit/authorization under the "Screening Procedures" section of the Blanchard's Cricket Frog Species Guidance document (<http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/er/ER0666.pdf>).

Global Range: Portions of the Midwest and central United States, and several small, possibly extirpated populations in southern Ontario, Canada.

B. Habitat

General Habitat Description: Blanchard's cricket frogs prefer open or semi-open canopy ponds, lakes, and a variety of habitats along and adjacent to streams and rivers including, marshes, fens, sedge meadows, low prairies, and exposed mud flats. Artificial scrapes also

provide ideal habitat for this species. Cricket frogs tend to breed in quiet water (no or low flow) and may also move from streams and rivers to adjacent wetlands and ponds. Suitable habitat also includes open and semi-open canopy uplands within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody.

Over-wintering Habitat: Cricket frogs cannot tolerate freezing or complete inundation for more than 24 hours during the winter and seek a variety of microhabitats that provide suitable overwintering conditions, including crayfish burrows, small mammal burrows, rotted-out root channels, seepage areas where groundwater flow prevents freezing at the surface or spaces created by sloughing streambanks. Cricket frogs typically overwinter in cracks and crevices in the soil along shorelines or in open and semi-open canopy uplands within 50 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody.

C. **Life History**

Home Range: Cricket frogs' daily movements are relatively short, 0.3-15.0 m (1-50 ft), but seasonal migrations of up to 1.3 km (0.8 mi) have been documented. They typically spend the active season within 75 feet of a wetland or waterbody, but will occasionally migrate longer distances.

Communal Behaviors: Cricket frogs typically breed communally and may overwinter communally.

Breeding: The species tends to breed in quiet water (no or low flow) and may also move from streams and rivers to adjacent wetlands and ponds. Breeding generally occurs from mid-May through mid-August, with some larvae not transforming until late September

Activity Periods:

Seasonal: Cricket frogs have a maximum active period of March 5 – November 30.

Daily: Cricket frogs are active and will feed day and night and will feed day and night upon various aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. They may call diurnally but are most active after dusk.

II. Management Protocol for Permitted/Authorized Incidental Take

If the management activity is for the purpose of recovering, maintaining, or improving the grassland, prairie, or savanna ecosystem that includes habitat for Blanchard's cricket frogs, then incidental take is allowed if the conditions listed below are followed.

A. Burning

1. If burning will occur further than 75 ft from any suitable wetland or waterbody, at any time of year, there are no restrictions.
2. If burning will occur further than 50 ft from any suitable wetland or waterbody, from December 1 – March 4, there are no restrictions.
3. If burning will occur within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody from March 5 – November 30, and temperatures are below 50°F, there are no restrictions.
4. If burning will occur within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody from March 5 – November 30, and temperatures are 50°F or above, only backing or flanking fires may be used (no head fires) within the 75 ft buffer of a suitable wetland or waterbody.

B. Mowing/Haying

1. If mowing/haying will occur 75 ft or more away from any suitable waterbody or wetland, at any time of year, there are no restrictions.
2. If mowing/haying will occur 50 ft or more away from any suitable waterbody or wetland, from December 1 – March 4, there are no restrictions.
3. If mowing/haying will occur within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody from March 5 – November 30 and temperatures are below 50°F, there are no restrictions.
4. If mowing/haying will occur within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody from March 5 – November 30 and temperatures are 50°F or above, a non-suction mower (flail mower, sickle bar mower, manual reel mower, electric/gas weed trimmer) must be used.

C. Selective Tree/Brush Cutting

Selective cutting on foot (e.g., chain saw), may be done without restriction.

D. Grazing

Grazing may occur without restriction, however intensive grazing is not recommended.

E. Herbicide Use

1. If herbiciding will occur 75 ft or more away from a suitable wetland or waterbody, at any time of year, there are no restrictions, as long as drift is considered and does not impact suitable cricket frog habitat.
2. If herbiciding will occur 50 ft or more away from a suitable wetland or waterbody, from December 1 – March 4, there are no restrictions, as long as drift is considered and does not impact suitable cricket frog habitat.
3. If herbiciding will occur within 75 ft of a suitable wetland or waterbody from March 5 – November 30, spot, basal-bark or cut-stump treatments on foot are allowed IF one of the following herbicides is used:
 - 2, 4-D salt (NOT 2, 4-D ester) at doses of 40 ppm or less
 - Diquat (dibromide) (e.g., Reward) at doses of 1.0 ppm or less
 - Glyphosate without a surfactant (e.g., Aquaneat)
 - Imazapyr (e.g., Arsenal, Chopper)
 - Triclopyr salt (NOT triclopyr ester) at doses of 2.0 ppm or less

Other herbicides may be approved on a case by case basis with approval from the Endangered Resources Review Program (DNRERReview@wi.gov). *Note – these herbicide brand names are only provided for reference and are not an endorsement of any specific brand.*