

SPECIES AT RISK

Northern corroboree frog *Pseudophryne pengilleyi*

EPBC status: **Critically endangered**

The northern corroboree frog is a tiny (2-3cm), distinctive frog with bright yellow (or lime-green) and black stripes running along its back. Its belly is covered in black, yellow and white blotches. Its call sounds like a short “squelch”.

The northern corroboree frog has a highly restricted distribution in alpine and subalpine regions of NSW and adjacent ACT.

Populations of this striking frog species have declined significantly, predominantly due to the amphibian disease chytridiomycosis. Adults breed in bogs during January to mid-March, building nests in the dense vegetation and litter that surrounds small pools. This habitat is integral for courtship and juvenile frog survival.

Research published in 2019 by scientists from the Australian National University found that feral horse trampling significantly impacts the quality of breeding sites for the northern corroboree frog by reducing the depth of litter and vegetation in bogs. Damaged habitat exposes eggs and renders them prone to desiccation and death. Horse damage also reduces nesting habitat.

These tiny ground-dwelling frogs are also at risk of death by direct trampling. While the decline of the northern corroboree frog is due primarily to the disease chytridiomycosis, **preventing degradation of its breeding habitat is critical to the long-term future of the species.**

References

Foster, CN & Scheele, BC 2019, 'Feral-horse impacts on corroboree frog habitat in the Australian Alps', *Wildlife Research*, vol. 46, pp. 194-190.

Bushfires tore through the habitat of the critically endangered northern corroboree frog in January 2020. What's left of their habitat is being further degraded by heavy-hooved feral horses.



Photo: Michael McFadden