



Ages: 5-12 yrs.

Time Required: 20-30 min

Slippery Coqui Eggs!

Try to protect the frog eggs by laying on as many as you can!

Materials

- Four large plastic bags
- Large balloons (approx. 60 ct.)
- Stopwatch
- Balloon pump
- Access to water faucet and buckets (optional)

Try this!

Step 1: Fill balloons with air with the pump or with water (optional).

Step 2: Place at least 25 large balloons filled with air in each large plastic bag or buckets if they are filled with water.

Step 3: Find four more friends to play with and split them into two pairs.

Step 4: Assign roles for each pair of friends (“Male frog” & “Female Frog”).

Step 5: Give bags filled with balloons (“eggs”) to “female frogs” and instruct “male frogs” to kneel next to the “female frogs”.

Step 6: Give each pair of frogs 1 minute using a stopwatch to see how many eggs each male frog can keep safely tucked under their bodies.

Step 7: The frog pair that can protect more eggs wins!

What’s going on?

Coqui frogs are a type of small tree frogs from Puerto Rico. When they lay eggs the male coqui frogs can usually lay on top of the eggs for 17 to 26 days to protect them from predators like snails and other hungry coquis and to also keep them moist. Female coqui frogs can lay between 16 and 46 eggs 4 to 6 times a year depending on the species.

These frog have what scientists call “direct development” which means that the frogs don’t go through a tadpole stage when they emerge from their egg; instead, the baby frogs emerge looking like miniature versions of the adults. The



**A species of Coquí
protecting its eggs!**

Common Coqui is considered an invasive species in places like Hawaii, where populations have increased dramatically over time, and it has even been introduced at some locations in southern Florida. One of the main reasons why these frogs are so successful in spreading into new territories is because of their direct development, since they can lay their egg clutches far away from water sources, as long as it's not in an extremely dry environment. There are also other species of frogs in Florida like the Greenhouse Frogs, who are related to Coqui frogs, but they are originally from Cuba, and they have also been very successful in establishing themselves in Florida, since adults and eggs can easily be transported in ornamental plants by humans. In addition, frogs aren't the only example of amphibians that use this reproductive strategy, there are also a number of species of Salamanders in North America, including Florida, that also have direct development.

Extension Activity

Try going out at night, especially on a rainy day and try to find some frogs! The easiest way to find frogs at night is to actually try to hear them calling instead of trying to see them first. Here is a link to Florida frog calls so that you can tune your ears to only hearing the frogs:
<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/discover-herps/florida-frog-calls/>.

Additional Resources

You can visit <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/discover-herps/florida-amphibians-reptiles/> to learn more about Florida reptiles and amphibians!