

Frog or Toad: Whats the Difference?

Amazing amphibians

Frogs and toads are part of a group of animals called amphibians. Amphibians are vertebrates. This means they have backbones just like you.

Amphibians go through metamorphosis. Their larval (immature) stage is very different from the adult.

People sometimes call amphibians "cold-blooded." A better term is ectothermic. "Ecto" means outside and "thermic" means heat. The body temperature of an ectotherm changes with the surrounding temperature outside.

Amphibians do not have claws or nails. They do not have scales, fur or feathers.



Bullfrog



Fowler's Toad

Give me some skin

Frogs have skin that is relatively smooth and moist, while toads have dry skin that is bumpy or warty. Amphibians can breathe through their skin on land and absorb oxygen through their skin while underwater.



Bullfrog foot

Leaps and bounds

Frogs have long legs that are great for leaping long distances. This helps them to escape predators. Frogs also have large, webbed back feet to move swiftly through water.

Toads have shorter legs. Toads have a secret weapon when it comes to avoiding predators. Keep reading to find out what it is.

Home sweet home

Frogs need to keep their skin moist, so they tend to live in more aquatic or damp habitats.

Mention "tree frogs" and most people think of the tropical rainforest. There are two species of tree frogs in Pennsylvania that live in trees and shrubs. They come to the ground only to breed. These two frogs, the spring peeper and the eastern gray treefrog, have sticky pads on their toes to help them climb.



Spring Peeper



Eastern Gray Treefrog

Toads do not need to live in moist environments, because their skin is dry. All toads in Pennsylvania live on or under the ground.

A sticky situation

Frogs and toads both have sticky tongues for catching prey. However, they use different methods for catching food.

Frog tongues are attached to the back of their mouth. Their tongues do not extend as far as a toad's tongue. Frogs tend to ambush prey by making a quick leap from a distance and using their tongue to grab prey.

Toads have long tongues attached to the front of their mouth. Toads actively crawl about looking for prey. When they spot something yummy, they get just close enough to reach it with a quick flick of their long tongue.



Pickerel Frog



Eastern American Toad

Winter hideaways

Frogs and toads are not active during winter. To survive during this time of hibernation, they must find a safe place to stay.

Frogs usually hibernate under the water. They go beneath the mud or leaves at the bottom of a stream or pond.

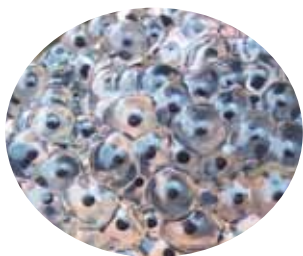
Toads hibernate on land. Toads use their back legs to dig a deep hole in the leaf litter or soft soil, where they stay safely below the frost line.

Extraordinary eggs

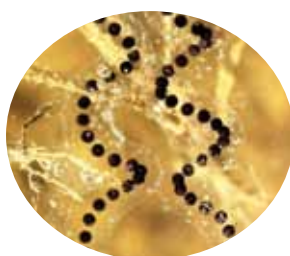
Frogs lay their eggs in free-floating clusters.

Most toads lay their eggs in strings.

You may also find salamander eggs. Some species of salamanders lay large clusters of eggs. However, salamander eggs are protected inside a gelatinous substance. The clusters are usually attached to an underwater branch or vegetation.



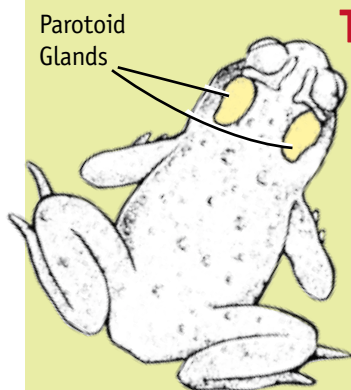
Wood Frog eggs



Eastern American Toad eggs



Marbled Salamander eggs



Toad-ally cool defense

Toads have a great way to keep predators away. They have two glands on their head, called parotoid glands, which secrete a poison when an animal bites them. This bad-tasting, toxic substance causes nausea and dizziness. Most predators quickly spit out the toad and learn that toads don't make good meals.

**MYTH-
BUSTED!**
**YOU
CANNOT
GET WARTS FROM
TOUCHING A
FROG OR TOAD.**



Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth
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