

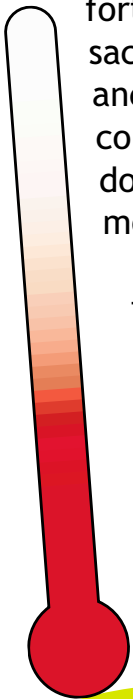
Amphibian Acoustics Activity

Ever been out on a spring or summer night and heard all sorts of strange animal calls? Some sound like a high-pitched “peep, peep peep,” and others like a low-pitched “jug-o-rum, jug-o-rum jug-o-rum.” Those calls are coming from amphibians. You are right if you guessed frogs and toads.

They call for different reasons and have several types of calls including advertisement, aggressiveness, courtship, release and defensive calls. Most often you will hear them call during their breeding season. How do they do it?

A frog or toad will pump air back and forth between its lungs and a vocal sac. Air passes over the vocal chords and causes them to vibrate, and out comes a “croak.” A frog or toad can do this without ever opening its mouth!

Scientists have learned that temperature affects when and how often a frog or toad will call. So borrow one of your parents’ thermometers, grab this chart and head outside for some fantastic froggy fun. See if you can guess which frog or toad could be calling based on the temperature, season and sounds you hear.



A helping hand

Frogs, toads and salamanders are sometimes very popular. Many people find them interesting and like to keep them as pets. If you are really interested in amphibians and want to give them a “helping hand,” it’s best to leave them in their natural habitat. There is nothing wrong with visiting an amphibian habitat and observing or catching them to look at. Just remember to handle them gently and return them where you found them. After all, they have special needs that are very difficult to duplicate in an aquarium or other container.

You should be aware that a fishing license is required by persons 16 and older to catch or take frogs (or turtles) from the waters of the Commonwealth. There are also creel limits or seasons for certain frogs. Consult the 2003 *Summary of Fishing Regulations & laws* for more information.

You should also know that it is illegal to possess certain amphibians because they are endangered or threatened. They include the New Jersey chorus frog, coastal plain leopard frog, Eastern mud salamander and green salamander.

Frog and Toad	Temperature Range*	Breeding Season	Call
Bullfrog	58 to 78	May - July	deep “jug-o-rum” or “ooohoom”
Spadefoot toad	40 to 88	March - September	nasal “wank” or “waagh”
Green frog	50 to 90	May - August	banjolike “plunk” or “gunk”
Spring peeper	34 to 74	March - June	high, whistlelike “peep”
Gray tree frog	64 to 88	April - August	loud, explosive trill
American toad	60 to 78	March - May	high-pitched trill

*Temperature ranges are taken from Southern states and will likely vary from Pennsylvania’s temperature ranges.



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