

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. 'Inky' Moore Jr.

PLAY

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth
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Introduction to Amphibians

They're slippery, slimy critters. Some swim. Others hop or crawl. Sometimes you never notice they are around. Other times you hear them all over the place. We're talking about frogs, toads and salamanders. They might look different from one another, but they all share one thing in common. They're amphibians!

What does that mean? They live a double life. "Amphibian" is Greek and comes from two words, "Amphi," which means "both," and "bios," which means life. It really means "living in two ways."

Most amphibians start life as an egg in the water or some other moist environment. They hatch into larvae with gills. Eventually they metamorphose (change life stages) into adults and lose their gills.

Of course, there are exceptions. You'll have to read further to learn more about that.

Believe it or not, amphibians are one of our planet's most successful creatures. They've been around for nearly 300 million years—not bad for such a small and seemingly unnoticed critter. Except for fishes, they are some of the oldest living vertebrates (animals with backbones). There was even an "Age of Amphibians," when they dominated the planet for millions of years. So take that, you dinosaurs!

No more hype about them.

Amphibians are way cooler and they are here to stay, not to mention how interesting and important they are in our environment. Let's take a journey into the world of amphibians.

When you are done with this issue of PLAY, pass it on. Remember that subscriptions to the PLAY newsletter are free to kids ages 8 to 12. Teachers and youth group leaders can also get PLAY newsletters. Contact the Fish & Boat Commission for more details on this program.

Don't forget to check out the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. The site is loaded with information on reptiles, amphibians, fish, fishing, boating and water safety.

