

Featured Species



KMC ©Karen Malcor-Chapman

Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*)

The western spadefoot toad is a stout bodied, dusky-olive to gray colored toad with irregular light stripes, random darker blotches, and a white underside. The skin is relatively smooth with scattered small tubercles. Its external eardrum is visible and it has a wedge-shaped spade on each hind foot. The western spadefoot toad can be found in north-central California, south through the central valley and foothills, and into Baja California. The western spadefoot toad tolerates a wide range of conditions from semiarid to arid and prefers short grass plains and sandy, gravelly areas.

This species is nocturnal and breeds January to October depending on rainfall. The mating call of the western spadefoot toad is a rolling trill lasting less than one second.

Use care when handling the western spadefoot toad, as it can secrete a substance that can inflame the skin and cause a runny nose and watery eyes. As always, wash your hands after handling any animal and never touch your eyes, mouth, or face before doing so. Karen Malcor-Chapman

"How Mr. Green Frog Got His Big Ears"

Jonathan Morgan, a photographer, wrote this poem for a disabled boy whose mother is involved with Holt International, a children's organization to which he donates prints. The little boy loves frogs, so Jonathan sent him a photo of Mrs. Frog and a poem explaining "How can you tell the male frog from the female frog?" Thus, the tale was written:

Little Mrs. Green Frog sat upon her pond log
very hungry on a hot summer's day,
And she spoke up loudly to her husband Mr. Green
Frog, saying, "Mister, What shall we eat to-day?"

Well he just slowly croaked back at her
in his croaky-woaky slow old way:
"Errrrrp! I don't know just yet, my Missus,
but it sure looks like it's a long, long, L-O-N-G hot
day!"

Now Mrs. Frog jumped up from her bump for good,
splashing water on her little wet man,
And she chirped all to herself, "Gosh-darn if he can't
get the food, then golly-durn I CAN !"

So she hid upon a HUGE green lily pad
that was as GREEN as her slimy green SKIN,
And she waited and she waited and she WAITED all
day—until she was almost DRIED-UP THIN!

Then all of a SUDDEN-ly
-with neither warning nor barely a sound-
Some-THING caught the corner of her big round
EYE- and she knew that DINNER was finally found!

Well they all still say Mrs. Frog went 'aflying that
day
like no frog had ever before or ever since has done
'Cause that hungry, hungry frog had caught a giant
red HUMMINGBIRD
on the back of her sticky pink TONGUE!

Later on that night when the frogs all sang in tune
from the great swamp where all the good frog
songs are sung, They RIB-RIB-RIB-peated the true
tale of the tiny frog that flew all around the world
with a hummingbird stuck to her tongue!

So unto this day if you look REAL CLOSELY
at the sides of the little Green Frog's head,
you'll see that HIS ears are always BIGGER than
HERS—
so he won't ever be able to IGNORE what she said
to him again!

Attract Amphibians to Your Yard: Tip #5

Use Mulch in Your Garden

Mulch helps keep moisture in the ground and also can reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers. Fertilizers are unhealthy for both you and amphibians. For more information visit: www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/sustainablegardening.cfm

Other tips can be found in earlier issues of the FrogWatch USA newsletter, which are available at www.aza.org/frogwatch.

News From Around the Country

What FrogWatchers are Hearing

- Nancy and Ken of Rhode Island are hearing spring peepers and American toads. They heard wood frogs earlier in the season.
- Valerie of Vermont has wood frogs, green frogs, and toads in her front yard pond.
- Desiree from Connecticut is hearing tree frogs.

Obituaries: Reports of Dead Frogs

- Richland, Michigan: seven dead frog species
- Warren, Ohio: over a dozen toads last year, two dead this year and two about to die
- St Clair County, Michigan: 20 large dead bullfrogs
- SW Michigan: number and species unknown
- Rhode Island: over seven dead toads

During this time of year you are more likely to find dead adult frogs and toads in ponds than earlier in the calling season. Are you finding multiple dead frogs in ponds (>6)? Do the frogs exhibit any signs of malformations, deformities, or discolorations that may indicate disease? If so, tell us what you are finding (email Mandy, mgaudreau@rwpz.org). Sightings of large numbers of dead frogs should be reported to your state wildlife agency.

Videos by FrogWatchers

Check out these YouTube amphibian videos by Kelsey Frey from Easton, Maryland. Use the links below or search "kelsadee".

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxJ8kk9nODA

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDRhzbWzikY

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfdC_5Hocww

We Want to Hear From You!

Please share your FrogWatching experiences with us and your fellow FrogWatch Volunteers! Send stories and photos to mgaudreau@rwpzoo.org, and you may see yourself in an upcoming FrogWatch newsletter! Past issues are available at www.aza.org/frogwatch.

Photos by FrogWatchers



The photos above are of Derek, known as the "frog whisperer" to his family and friends in Byfield, Mass. His mom, Johanna, says that Derek catches frogs so easily that it almost seems as though the frogs enjoy his company. Derek is always gentle and is sure to return them to the backyard pond where he finds them.



Above is a bullfrog known as "King" by Shirley and Wayne of Maryland. Wayne tells us that "King" visits them almost every summer night