

Greetings FrogWatch USA™ Volunteers

It certainly feels like fall at the AZA office. Lower temperatures, sweaters, and pumpkin lattes have made an appearance, and the calling activity of frogs and toads is winding down. We have reached the end of the 2012 FrogWatch USA season, which began on 1 February and ran through 31 August. It is now time to submit any remaining datasheets you may have and then enjoy a well-deserved break. We would like to thank all of the volunteers and chapter coordinators that participated in FrogWatch USA this year. The program is not possible without you, and we look forward to you joining us again in the 2013 season!

If you are looking for other opportunities to get outside and watch the seasons change, may we suggest exploring citizen science projects that continue into the fall and winter? For example, Project BudBurst (neoninc.org/budburst/) participants monitor the leafing, flowering, and fruiting of plants. You can sign up for the Project BudBurst “Fall into Phenology” event between 10 September and 31 October to document changes in leaf color. Another opportunity is the first, and longest running, citizen science survey in the world: the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which takes place 14 December 2012 - 5 January 2013. You can learn more and locate a count near you by visiting birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count.

Submit Your 2012 Data

All observations should be submitted as soon as possible after each monitoring visit, but it is not too late to turn in any that may have been missed or accumulated. Please submit your site registration forms and observation datasheets to frogwatch@aza.org or via U.S. Mail to FrogWatch USA National Coordinator, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 710, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

Only data submitted on or before **15 October 2012** will be entered and reviewed for inclusion in the 2011 - 2012 data summary report.



Carpenter Frog. Copyright Scott A. Smith.

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Share Your Stories

Volunteer Linda Nelson shared a photo of one of many Sierran treefrog individuals (*Pseudacris sierra*; formerly *P. regilla*) she hears calling at her FrogWatch USA site in California. Linda has been monitoring this site since 2007 and reports that the species calls September through May, with activity peaking in March.

We want to hear from you! Share your FrogWatch USA experiences, questions and photos with us, and your fellow FrogWatch USA volunteers:

Email the National Coordinator: frogwatch@aza.org

“Like” us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/FrogWatchUSA

View the Flickr Photostream: www.flickr.com/frogwatchusa

Upload photos to the Flickr Group: www.flickr.com/groups/frogwatchusa



Sierran Treefrog.
Copyright Linda Nelson.

Frog and Toad Call Identification Tips

The most important part of FrogWatch USA is being able to identify frog and toad calls accurately. In some areas, like Alaska and the northwestern United States, there are only one to four species present, so the task is relatively easy. However, in other areas, such as the southeastern United States, there may be over two dozen species present, each with a unique call.

Get Started

- If you are already a FrogWatch USA volunteer, engage your friends and family to become volunteers for the 2013 season!
- If you are a new participant, locate a FrogWatch USA chapter near you and register to attend a volunteer training by visiting: www.aza.org/become-a-frogwatch-volunteer/. Your chapter coordinator will provide training on the species you are likely to hear in your state or county.
- Develop a list of frog and toad species that can be found in your state by visiting: www.aza.org/states-and-territories/.
- Further refine the list of species you are likely to hear in your community by viewing the interactive range maps provided by the USGS National Amphibian Atlas: www.pwrc.usgs.gov/naa.
- Experiment with different tricks and techniques to help you to learn and memorize the calls. It does not matter if the tricks seem silly, as long as they work for you. Studying pictures while playing a call, sketching the frog and/or the sound it makes, mimicking and acting out sounds, and playing a game of frog call bingo have worked well for others.

Practice Makes Perfect

- The following are a few online resources where you can search for and play frog and toad calls:
 - USGS Frog Call Lookup and Public Quiz - www.pwrc.usgs.gov/frogquiz/
 - eNature - www.enature.com
 - Cornell Lab of Ornithology Macaulay Library - macaulaylibrary.org
 - Western Soundscape Archive - westernsoundscape.org
 - Midwest Frogs (sponsored by the Chicago Herpetological Society) - www.midwestfrogs.com
- Consult local resources and ask your chapter coordinator for assistance.
- Try putting frog and toad calls on your mp3 player and playing them on shuffle. Hearing a call right after your favorite song might help reinforce it.
- Listen to the calls during your commute - but do not get distracted while driving.

Demonstrate Your Knowledge

- Become a certified FrogWatch USA volunteer by demonstrating your call identification skills and protocol knowledge. Contact your chapter coordinator to learn more.
- A host of other resources to prepare you for next season are available on our website: www.aza.org/current-frogwatch-volunteers/.

FrogWatch USA Chapter Coordinator Training Workshops

In-person chapter coordinator training workshops are being scheduled for **fall 2012 through early winter 2013** with the support of National Science Foundation grant funding.

If you are part of an organization that would be interested in forming a FrogWatch USA chapter and/or hosting a training workshop, please contact frogwatch@aza.org. Details on requirements for hosting a chapter and information on upcoming training opportunities are available online: www.aza.org/host-a-frogwatch-chapter/.

Creature Feature: Carpenter Frog



Copyright Dick Bartlett.

The carpenter frog (*Lithobates virgatipes*) is identified by its distinct and repeated two part call which sounds like carpenters driving nails into a wooden board. There are four golden brown stripes that run laterally down the back in addition to striping on the rear legs. It also lacks the ridges or folds of skin on the back that are characteristic of some other true frog (ranid) species.

Virginia Zoo FrogWatch USA Chapter Coordinator Yohn Sutton and volunteers monitor sites at a local state park. Yohn observed carpenter frogs calling in July and August while monitoring, which was particularly exciting news for the park staff. Carpenter frogs were believed to be there historically, but had not been documented in some time. Yohn was able to confirm their presence through FrogWatch USA monitoring!

Ecologically, this species is one of the poorest known of ranid frogs (amphibiaweb.org). It is found along the eastern coast of the United States, from New Jersey south to Florida, and is closely associated with a special type of sphagnum bog known as Carolina Bays. The carpenter frog has special conservation status listings throughout its range.