

FROGS

of the BFEC

Frogs emerging from hibernation and filling the night with their calls are a welcome sign of spring! Look for these species in the BFEC ponds (next to the farm house) and wooded wetlands along Wolf Run.



Northern Spring Peeper

Spring Peepers hibernate in mud and under debris and can tolerate freezing almost completely solid! They are the first of Ohio's frogs to begin calling in spring, sometimes as soon as the ice melts in early February. They are small, pinkish-beige colored frogs with an X-shaped mark on their backs and are extremely difficult to locate. Although they are only an inch in length, their chorus can be deafening. Upon maturing, young frogs move away from water and into moist wooded areas or wet meadows.



Wood Frog

The wood frog is Ohio's most terrestrial frog, a temporary resident of the vernal (seasonal) wetlands that appear in BFEC woods in the Spring. It spends the rest of the year in mature woodlands and wet forests under logs or leaf litter. Wood frogs are dark green to brown and have a dark line across the snout and eye. They can be found floating in ponds on warm nights in February and March. Egg laying is communal in large masses covering the surface.

Wood frogs range into the tundra of Alaska, the farthest of any North American amphibian.



Northern Leopard Frog

As indicated by their name, these frogs have leopard-like spots. They are fairly common, and can be found around the edges of lakes and in marshes and wet meadows. In March through May they breed in ponds, streams, and flooded fields. At the BFEC they are seen rarely in our ponds, and more frequently in wooded wetlands. The male's call sounds like a person's thumb rubbing over a balloon. Leopard frogs sing even when they are totally submerged in water.



Bullfrog

At a length of up to 6 inches, bullfrogs are the largest frog in North America. They can be found in larger bodies of water, where they spend most of their time along shallow edges. Their diets consist of insects, mice, and other frogs. Bullfrogs have a raised fold of skin that ends just behind the ear, unlike the green frogs, whose fold extends down its side. In May males begin making their deep, resonant "jug-of-rum" call to attract mates. Females lay eggs in masses in the shallow water, which develop in less than a week into tadpoles. They spend two years as tadpoles growing to a length of 3 to 5 inches before they metamorphose into young frogs.



Northern Green Frog

Green frogs are large, ranging from 2 ½ to 4 inches long, and are green with white bellies. The line of raised skin extending along their sides distinguishes them from bullfrogs. The male's call begins in late May and sounds like a pluck of an out-of-tune banjo string. The female deposits a floating mass of eggs on the pond surface. Tadpoles develop rapidly and grow quite large. Some change into small frogs in late summer, while others overwinter as tadpoles and transform into frogs the following spring.



American Toad

The American Toad is very common, 2 ½ to 3 inches in length, and found in many natural habitats and backyards. They appear green to brown and have very bumpy skin. Toads start breeding in late March, and will lay up to 20,000 eggs per female in double strands. Tadpoles at first feed on algae and plants, but as limbs appear they also eat small invertebrates. Four weeks after the eggs are laid, young pea-sized adults emerge; look for them along pond edges from late May to mid June.



Gray Tree Frog

Like chameleons, these frogs can change color from green to gray. Their skin is bumpy and has irregular dark splotches, although young frogs (like the one picture here) may lack splotches. Toes have rounded pads that allow them to climb vertical surfaces, like trees! In late April or early May males begin calling from trees and migrate towards small ponds or wet ditches, where females lay floating clusters of eggs. Tadpoles have a red or orange cast to their tails, and in six to nine weeks will metamorphose into a frog. The tiny young frogs will stay near the pond where you may find them in late summer, and will eventually grow to 1 to 2 inches in length.