

# Field Notes

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre

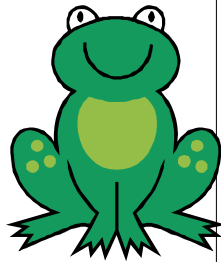
April 2003

## FROG SURVEY

The frog survey is part of our daily public program. It is also part of a program run by Manitoba Conservation across Manitoba. The surveys are done annually and the results are then compiled.

The surveys are done to give us an idea of where each species occurs, when their breeding seasons start and end and may even indicate possible numbers. In Manitoba we have 12 species of frogs and toads:

- Plains spadefoot
- American toad
- Great plains toad
- Canadian toad
- Gray treefrog
- Cope's gray treefrog
- Northern spring peeper
- Western chorus frog
- Wood frog
- Northern leopard frog
- Green frog
- Mink frog.



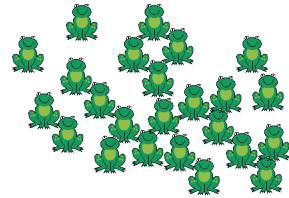
The survey is done daily during the breeding season of the frogs: as soon as the frogs start singing (mid-April) to when the frogs stop singing (mid-July).

You may hear these types of frog and toad calls here at OHM:

- Canadian toad: fast trill
- Boreal chorus frog: running finger along comb
- Wood frog: coot-like, laughing
- Northern spring peeper: high pitched peeps
- Northern leopard frog: deep, stomach growling

## Did you know?

That a group of frogs is called an ARMY.



That tree frogs have little suction cups or sticky toe pads on their feet to help them climb around in trees.



That you don't get warts from frogs or toads (warts are caused by viruses).



That a frog's eyes come down to push on the roof of the mouth to help push the food down its throat.



# Field Notes

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre

April 2003



# F

rogs and toads are amphibians.

Amphibians spend part of their life in the water and part on land. Many species (all of Manitoba's) deposit their eggs in the water and the larval stage is also spent in the water. Some species only need moist areas for egg laying and larval development. After the eggs hatch and the larva develop, they undergo a transformation (metamorphosis) to the adult stage. The adults may then spend part of their life in the water (or in moist areas) and the other part on land.

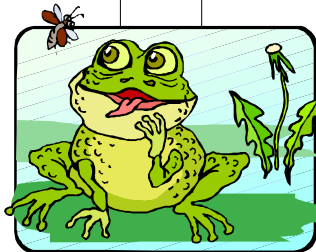
Amphibians have moist, scaleless skin that is usually smooth. It tends to be bumpy in toads. The skin produces mucus that makes the animal difficult to catch but more importantly keeps the skin moist so that water uptake and oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange can occur. Other skin glands produce distasteful substances to protect against predators and infections.

There are 3260 species of amphibians world-wide of which 40 species occur in Canada. In Manitoba we have 16 species of amphibians (4 salamanders, 4 toads, 8 frogs).

## Winter Survival

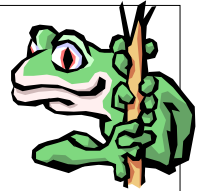
Frogs and toads survive the winter in 3 different ways.

- They burrow below the frost line so their body fluids never freeze.
- They hibernate in the leaf litter and produce an antifreeze that allows them to tolerate ice formation in their bodies.
- They hibernate underwater where the deeper water never freezes.



## Drop in numbers

Since the 1980's, amphibian populations have suffered sharp declines around the world. These populations tend to fluctuate normally however; some species have dropped off steeply. Leopard Frogs have been hit very hard. Because amphibians are so closely dependent on water and can breathe through their skin they are vulnerable to air and water dangers. They are also an essential link in the food chain. For these reasons they are good indicators of the health of our environment.



Intensive research is being done in the hopes of identifying the reasons for the sharp decline. Some possible causes include pesticides, fertilisers, infections, diseases, air and water pollutants, ultra-violet radiation, acid rain, and habitat loss.

In the last few years frog numbers in many areas appear to be coming back up. More research is still needed to determine the reason for this fluctuation.

## Additional Information

If you are interested in more information here are a few good places to look.

- <http://allaboutfrogs.org/frogland.html>
- <http://www.naturenorth.com/winter/frozen/Ffrozen.html>
- <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/es/recovery/fall98/eng/green.html>
- The amphibians and reptiles of Manitoba by William B. Preston



Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre is a joint project of  
Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of Manitoba

