

You can help



Engage with elders and knowledge holders in your community and help share their information about amphibians.



Report frog and toad sightings to wildlifeobs@gov.nt.ca and track them on naturewatch.ca/frogwatch. Include photos if you can.



If you see a toad or frog, don't try to catch it! They breathe through their skin and your hands can harm them.



Make sure to keep the water and land around you clean so that the amphibians can breathe safely through their skin underwater.



Get a water testing kit (available at Ecology North) and report your findings to naturewatch.ca.



Be aware of when amphibians may be on the move and keep an eye out not to harm them - especially if you're driving on the Liard Highway in May!



Northern Leopard Frog
Photo: GNWT ENR

Resources

nwt-species-at-risk.ca Information about species at risk in the NWT and their management plans. Includes national and territorial maps.

nwt-science-focus.ca Ecology North's educator resource hub for lesson plans and activities including more related to Species at Risk.

naturewatch.ca/frogwatch Interactive map of frog and toad sightings across Canada, users input data to help monitor and understand the environment.

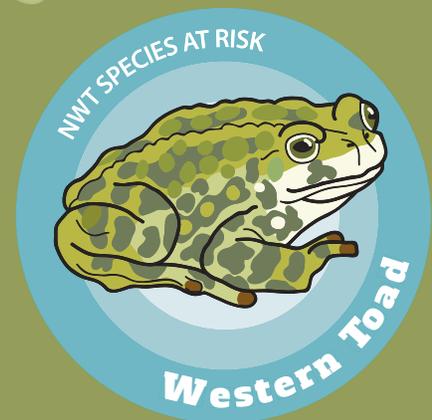
NWT Public Libraries Have many books and DVDs containing information and stories about NWT amphibians.

amphibianark.org Includes information about global efforts to help amphibians, games, lesson plans and more.

californiaherps.com/frogs Includes photos of the stages of the frog's life, videos, sound bites and other information about the Northern Leopard Frog.



NWT Amphibians At Risk



Amphibians in the NWT

For a long time, there was less known about amphibians in the NWT than any other region in Canada. Amphibians are few in numbers, stay dormant for the colder parts of the year, and have a small territory that they stick to for their entire lives. The discovery of new breeding grounds and populations is extremely rare.

Most of what we know about NWT amphibians is traditional knowledge and is backed up by research done elsewhere. Traditional knowledge holders state that the number of frogs and toads is decreasing.

Globally 42% of amphibian species populations are declining, 1/3 of all species are threatened or extinct as of 2011. The Northern Leopard Frog and the Western Toad are threatened, they share similar habitats and needs as all amphibians and reptiles, so there is one management plan in place for them all.



Western Toad
Photo: Mark Thompson

Did You Know?

A lot of knowledge has been collected about amphibians in the NWT in the past 20 years. Before that there was only one unconfirmed record of the Western Toad from over 100 years ago!

Northern Leopard Frog

(*Lithobates pipiens*)



Adult Size: 11cm

Lifespan: 4 years

Colours: Tadpoles are slender and black. Adults are usually green, and sometimes slightly brown.

Adult Markings: Unmarked milky-white underside. Two light stripes down the back. Dark spots surrounded by light borders. Smooth skin and slender bodies for jumping and swimming.

Call: A long drawn out rattling snore which ends with several rapid short grunts.

Summer Habitat: Meadows and grasslands. Prefer to be in the water.

Hibernation: In the fall the frogs seek rivers and lakes with bottoms covered in sand or mud, often returning to the same ones year after year. They hibernate at the bottom where the water does not freeze. Dissolved oxygen is needed for them to breathe through their skin.

Eggs: Females lay one clutch with between 600-7000 eggs per year, depending on their size and age.

Breeding: Over a few days in mid to late May, the frogs gather to breed and lay eggs, even though there is sometimes still ice on the wetlands. They prefer open shallow water with new vegetation and no fish.

Population: 2,500-10,000 adults, possibly less.

Western Toad

(*Anaxyrus boreas*)



Adult Size: 5-12cm

Lifespan: 11 years

Colours: Tadpoles and toadlets are black. Adults range anywhere from olive green to reddish brown.

Adult Markings: Large light stripe down the back. Upper body covered in little round bumps. Short stumpy legs and body, prefer to crawl rather than hop.

Call: Those found in the NWT have no vocal sacks, making them a non-calling population.

Summer Habitat: Wetlands, forests, shrublands, meadows. Prefer to spend their time on land.

Hibernation: These toads return to the same locations year after year to overwinter below the frost line. They go underground or to natural cavities such as old beaver lodges, and get insulated by snow. They need to stay near water so that they do not dry out.

Eggs: Females 4-6 years old can only lay one clutch (about 3,000 eggs,) in their lifetime.

Breeding: In late May, the Western Toad must cross the Liard Highway to get to their only known breeding ground at the mouth of the Muskeg River. Their colouration makes them almost impossible to see when driving, and many do not make the crossing.

Population: 200-8,000 adults.