



The American Toad is easily recognized by its rather thick, wart covered skin and its large, prominent parotid glands. With its compact form and thick skin, this species is well adapted to minimize water loss and thus to life on land. The presence of a large urinary bladder, which can be used as a water storage organ, and its capability to use the tubercles on its back legs to dig backwards into the soil further increase its capability to lead a terrestrial life. Adult American Toads range in size from 2 inches to 4 1/2 inches (5.1 to 11.4 cm.) with females being the largest individuals. Once adulthood is reached, growth is slight. Mortality is very high in the first year and their population turns over quite rapidly. In exceptional circumstances, individuals can survive to 8 years of age.

The warts and parotid gland of toads produce a sticky white substance which is highly toxic to some animals. If this mucus is transferred to one's mouth by handling toads, it can numb the mouth tissues. Certain animals such as garter snakes have adapted their physiology so that they can eat toads while certain other animals have learned to eat the flesh but not the skin.

The feeding strategies of toads include both stalking and sitting still. They flip out their tongue and its sticky pronged tips are used to capture the invertebrate prey. If it doesn't fit into the toad's mouth, the front legs will be used to stuff in the protruding parts. The toad usually eats its own skin when it is shed.

This species is common in a wide variety of habitats ranging from fresh wet habitats to deciduous and coniferous woodlands.

TREEFROGS

SPRING PEEPER

The shrill peeps of the Spring Peeper fills the warmer early spring evenings with a crescendo of sound. These vocalizations are made by the male Spring Peeper utilizing its fully inflated vocal sac. Their vocalizations peak in April or May depending on the temperature. More muted calls may continue on dull days into late fall.

This treefrog is characterized by the presence of a prominent dark diagonal cross marking on its back and a black bar between its eyes. Its base back colour ranges from light to dark brown or sometime reddish. The males have a yellow throat sometimes heavily marked by dark pigment. This a partially arboreal (tree climbing) form which is known to climb low bushes.

