

Frogs and toads are amphibians [class *Amphibia* from the Greek words *amfi* (both) and *bio* (life) because they uniquely live on both land and in water]. Both are cold blooded vertebrates.

Their skin is permeable, or porous, giving frogs and toads the ability to breathe and “drink” through their skin.

Frog and toad life cycles begin with soft permeable eggs laid in the water. Those hatch into aquatic larva with gills (tadpoles), grow legs, and finally transform into adults with air-breathing lungs.

Basic differences between frogs/ treefrogs and toads

Frog

- Smooth skin often appearing moist
- Tend to spend most time near or in water
- Long, hind legs with webbed feet (for leaping and swimming)
- Tend to lay eggs in clusters

Treefrog

- Smooth skin often appearing dry
- Tend to spend most time on plants
- Toe pads (for clinging) and long hind legs (for leaping)
- Tend to lay eggs in clusters

Toad

- Bumpy skin often appearing dry
- Tend to spend more time on land but still need water
- Short hind legs (for walking on land)
- Tend to lay eggs in long chains

The two best keys to identification are location and sound because frogs and toads are not often seen. Below are common physical characteristics. Frog calls are on the following page.

GROUND LEVEL NEAR WATER

Pig Frog– 3.5-6.5 inches; yellow to green to dark brown; usually has splotches regardless of background color; tympanum (hearing organ) larger than the eye on males but same size or smaller on females; the largest frog in SW Florida

Corkscrew's common
Frogs & Toads



A male Pig Frog inflates as preparation to call. Note the size of the tympanum.

Southern Leopard Frog– 2-5 inches; one light stripe running to rear from nose through eye and another below eye; light to chocolate brown with dark brown blotches; found by water's edge or on fallen logs near water; excellent jumper that can leap out 2-3 feet from water's edge

ON GRASSES, SHRUBS, TREES

Green Treefrog– 1.5-2.5 inches; female larger than male; white “racing stripe” down side, often with black border; tympanum greenish to green-brown; found on stems, stalks, branches

Squirrel Treefrog– 7/8-1-5/8 inches; mostly green with yellow around mouth (yellow lips) and under chin; lacks well defined stripe of Green Treefrog but may have pale yellowish stripe; tympanum brown to bronze; found higher on stems, stalks, and branches than Green Treefrogs

Cuban Treefrog– 1.5-5.5 inches; female larger than male; colors range from light gray to dark brown; skin bumpier than other treefrogs; noticeably large toe pads; found on stems, buildings, and branches; secretes toxic substance if handled (*exotic*)



Pinewoods Treefrog– 1-1.5 inches; mostly grayish-brown with slight reddish cast on back; stays in canopies of pine trees but comes down to breed; rarely seen except when mating near bases of trees

GROUND LEVEL IN DRY AREAS

Oak Toad– 0.5-1.5 inches; light stripe from nose down middle of back with dark splotches in pairs on either side of stripe; overall blackish to gray; noticeably bumpy skin; found in dry areas under grass, fallen twigs; smallest toad in the United States

Southern Toad– 1.6-4.5 inches; two noticeable ridges between eyes ending in conspicuous knobs giving a sculptured appearance; usually grayish but red or brown sometimes found; dark spots on skin; skin bumpy; found in dry sandy areas

Narrow-mouthed Toad– 7/8-1.5 inches; unusual body shape with rotund body and narrow head that comes to a sharp-point; color varies from gray to brown; found around or under logs or other ground debris

Greenhouse Frog– 5/8-1 inch; dark brownish-gray with pointed nose; found under logs, debris; a very small frog that can sit on a dime without hanging over (*exotic*)

Frog Trivia

- When frogs swallow a meal, they use their eyes to push the food down their throats, which is why the eyes recede into the head when feeding.
- Most frogs have teeth (a ridge of small cone teeth on the upper edge of their jaws and roof of the mouth); toads do not have teeth.
- When frogs lick their front feet and rub their bodies, they are actually wetting down their skin with mucus to keep the skin moist so they can breathe.