

Animals of the World: Amphibians



THE FROG



Frogs and toads are amphibians and belong to the anurans group. The first frogs that existed date back to the Triassic in Madagascar, but according to their molecular clock, their origins can be extended to 265 million years ago.

These animals are known for the metamorphosis they go through as they grow. They are oviparous, hatch from small eggs, and grow in an aquatic environment as tadpoles. Tadpoles have a large tail, which allows them to move in the watery environment that they mainly live during this stage. After a few weeks, they lose their tail, develop long folded legs, and live both on land and in water.



Frogs are small, with bulging eyes, a slimy, elastic tongue, and sticky saliva. Their large hind legs allow them to make great jumps, and their hands help them to be skilled on land and in the water.

Their skin is glandular and emits secretions that are unpleasant and toxic. Some frogs are smooth and others rough. They have varying skin colors that camouflage them well in their environment, such as mottled brown, gray, and green. Others have more vivid and bright colors that threaten predators. Their skin is semi-permeable and susceptible to dehydration, which is why they need humid places. They have adaptations that allow them to be in dry habitats.

Frogs produce different types of vocalizations to help them survive, scare off predators, attract mates, and at reproduction.



They are cold-blooded animals, which means that their body temperature adapts to that of the environment in which they live.

When frogs are in their earliest stage as tadpoles, they feed on what is in their aquatic environment. They are omnivorous since they eat both very small animals and algae or other plant compounds. As they grow, their ability to feed on other animals also increases progressively; they become insectivorous and carnivorous in adulthood. They are so efficient at converting what they eat into body mass that they are appetizing for predators.

It is not always easy to distinguish a toad from a frog since toads are similar to frogs and are part of the family of anurans. However, frogs tend to have softer, moister skin, while toads' skin is drier, rougher, and wartier. Another difference is that frogs have longer, webbed hind legs that help them jump on land and also swim in the water. Toads do not have long legs to jump because they move on foot, and they also do not have webbed feet to swim because they live on land.



Toad



Frog

Frogs can be found from the tropics to subarctic regions, but their highest concentration is in humid and tropical areas. There are more than 4800 species and are the most diverse group of vertebrates. Although it seems that there are many frogs, their population has decreased considerably since 1950. More than a third of the species is endangered, and more than 120 have become extinct since 1980. Their decline has been caused by variations in the climate, polluting substances, agricultural pesticides, and chemical components that affect their thin skin, through which they breathe and absorb liquids. Also, humans consume frogs, especially their legs.



2.



Name _____

Date _____



THE FROG

Answer the questions.



1. What group of amphibians do frogs belong to? From the information in the text, describe the characteristics of frogs.

2. Why do frogs need humid places?

3. What metamorphosis do frogs undergo?

4. What does it mean to be oviparous, insectivorous, and carnivorous?

5. What are frogs called when they hatch from eggs? What do they feed on at this early stage?



Name _____

Date _____

6. What does it mean that frogs are cold-blooded?



7. According to the text, describe the differences between frogs and toads.

8. Where can frogs be found?



9. Why are frogs in danger of extinction and many are already extinct?

10. Why do frogs produce different vocalizations?

