



American Toad (*Anaxyrus/Bufo americanus*)

Anna-axe-e-rus americ-cane-iss



Description: The American toad is a medium sized, sturdily built anuran typically ranging in size from 2 to 3 ½ inches in size. They can be quite variable in color, ranging from black, grayish, olive, tan to brown, yellowish, to reddish with dry warty skin and two distinct kidney shaped paratoid glands behind the eyes. Toe pads are lacking, and there may also be a pale light to dark lateral stripe on each side.

Taxonomy and Classification:

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Family: Bufonidae

Genus: Bufo/Anaxyrus

Species: *Bufo/Anaxyrus americanus**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Similar/Confusing Species: American toads have dry, warty skin, two distinct paratoid glands behind the eye, and short hind limbs for hopping rather than long leaps. This is usually sufficient to distinguish toads from frogs/other Wisconsin anurans. For tadpole/larvae identification, see the following link below:

<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/pdf/level1/wepp/TadpoleLarvalSalamanderKeys.pdf>

Etymology: Anaxyrus-Anax (king or chief) urus (tail). americanus-belonging to America. Bufo-"a toad".

Sounds/Call: The anurans are perhaps the most audible and vocal of the herptile groups. The American toad's call is a long melodic trill lasting anywhere from 10 to 30 seconds. American toads may also produce other sounds/vocalizations (such as distress, territorial, or rivalry calls), but some rustling and/or plopping into water may also be heard.

Subspecies: Eastern American Toad (*Anaxyrus/Bufo americanus americanus*).

Range & Habitat: Abundant statewide. The American toad can be found in nearly any habitat where there is suitable breeding habitat, such as temporary to permanent bodies of water (i.e. ponds, ditches, slow moving rivers and streams, marshes, and other wetlands).

Habits & Natural History: American toads are a very common and widespread species of amphibian in Wisconsin, being found nearly anywhere where there is suitable habitat including residential and agricultural areas. Their dry, warty skin enable this adaptable species to lead a more terrestrial lifestyle

<http://www.madisonherps.org>

than most other anurans. The pair of kidney shaped paratoid glands behind the eyes secrete a milky substance, which is distasteful to many predators, and serves as a defense mechanism. American toads typically begin their calling from late spring to early summer (late April to mid-June).

Phenology: American toads emerge from overwintering as early as the first warm days of mid to late April or May and begin calling from early to mid-May through June. They will remain active throughout the rest of the year through late September or October (or sometimes even later in the year if warmer temperatures persist or otherwise permit).

Conservation Status: WI Common with no special protections, but regulated by WI DNR. IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this species, group of species, or this informational sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

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