

School-to-Nature



Toad

There are 18 types of Toads in the U.S. but only one lives in Wisconsin. It is called the Eastern American Toad, American Toad, or Hop-Toad. Toads are present on all Conservancy lands where there is water available. They can vary in color: tan, brown, reddish-brown, or olive green.

American Toads are amphibians; but they are land-dwellers, needing a water source only for egg-laying. Tadpoles hatch and live in the water for about 40-70 days, feeding on rotted vegetation and microscopic animals before reaching maturity and leaving the water behind. Toads can live from 4-15 years. They eat mosquitos, flies, worms, ants, spiders, mealworms, crickets, and slugs, swallowing them whole because they have no teeth. They are hunted by foxes, skunks, ravens, crows, owls, hawks, and grackles. Toads in our area hibernate in the winter. They dig very deep down into loose soil, which insulates them from freezing temperatures.



Toads need to live where there is moist shelter. They are found in habitats ranging from woodlands to wetlands, to fields and prairies, as long as they have access to nearby water and moist shade. Toads can live in our yards, as long as there is shelter such as moist brush, a good-sized rock, or shade among garden plants. Some people make "toad houses" by placing curved pieces of broken pots upside-down in the garden, so that a toad can be covered and shaded. They should be welcomed for eating mosquitoes.



Toads can be handled, very gently; but they have a secretion on their skin that is toxic enough to cause vomiting and diarrhea if enough of it would be swallowed, so wash up after handling a toad. A dog may lick or bite at a toad, and that can also cause similar illness. Because of their bumpy skin, it was once thought that toads caused warts; they DO NOT cause warts.

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