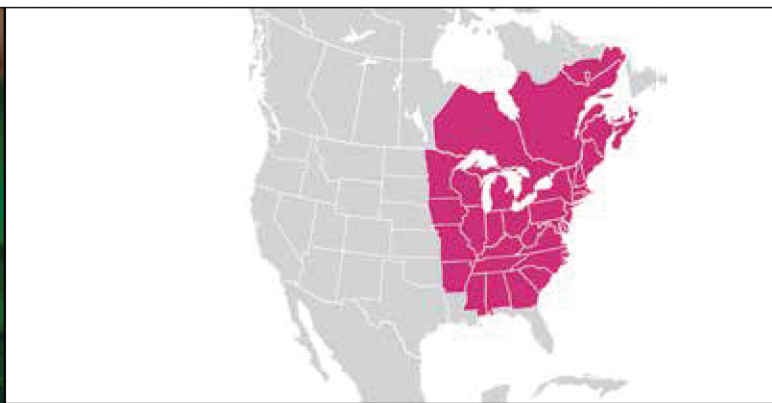


AMERICAN TOAD

updated 03/17



Range	Found throughout eastern United States and Canada
Habitat	Habitat generalists that can live anywhere with moist hiding spots or vegetative cover and a food/water source. Within their range, they can be found from forests to suburban yards and anywhere in between. During the winter, they only need moist soil and cover to bury themselves in to stay moist and keep from freezing.
Diet (wild)	Adults are carnivorous and eat a variety of insects and invertebrates. They have been known to eat anything that they can fit in their mouths. They extend their very sticky tongues to catch their prey. These toads are well known for their ability to eat huge numbers of insects and are welcome in many gardens to keep pest numbers down.
Diet (captivity)	
Description	Length: 4½ inches. Large, usually chubby toad. Color varies but they are usually brown, brick red, or olive-colored. They have lighter colored patterns on their bodies along with brown spots. All American toads have warts and some have a light stripe down the back. Both male and female toads have light colored, spotted bellies but males have darker throats.
Lifespan	Wild: most live only a year but can live up to 10. One documented toad lived for 36 years.
Reproduction	The female will release 3,000–20,000 eggs into the shallow water where the male will fertilize them (external fertilization). The eggs are attached to underwater vegetation and are arranged in double strings covered in a clear, gelatinous material. The eggs incubate up to two weeks before hatching into aquatic, herbivorous tadpoles that have gills, a tail, and no legs. Within hours, the gills are covered and a single opening, called a spiracle, is formed. Over the course of 5–10 weeks, the tadpoles grow, lose their tails, develop legs, and eat more animal material. When they leave the water in May, they appear as miniature toads and are sexually mature by the next spring. Males call to females with a high-pitched trill during the spring time from a water source. They use a round vocal-sac under their chins to trill. To mate, the male will grasp the female behind the forearms in the amphibian mating posture called amplexus.
Behavior	Primarily nocturnal and most active during warm humid times of the year. When night falls, American toads come out of their hiding spots and hunt for food. As a defensive mechanism against predators, they will secrete toxins from their parotid glands (behind the ears), which produce a foul-smelling toxic chemical. Other defenses include puffing up to appear larger and excreting large amounts of urine when picked up by a predator.
Our animals	2 undetermined sex. Arrived at PPZ in 06/2011. Wild born in Michigan
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American toads, while still growing, shed their external skin every couple of weeks or so. Older frogs lose their skin around four times yearly. The skin peels off in one piece, and is collected under the tongue, where it is then gulped down. American toads have one of the most notable calls of all toads: a long high-pitched trill that lasts 4–20 seconds. American toads use this call as a way to attract females for breeding. Toads do not drink water but soak it in, absorbing moisture through their skin. Eastern hognose snakes specialize in eating toads. Some snakes, such as garter snakes, are immune to the poisonous glands of American toads. When these toads are faced with a snake predator, American toads will inflate their bodies with air to make themselves more difficult for a snake to swallow. There are approximately 4,800 species of frogs. The use of the common names “frog” and “toad” has no taxonomic relevance. From a classification perspective, the family Bufonidae is considered “true toads” and the family Ranidae is “true frogs.” True toads are toothless and generally have warty, dry skin. They have a pair of parotid glands on the back of their heads that contain a poison which they excrete when stressed. Male toads also possess a Bidder’s organ: Under the right conditions, the organ becomes an active ovary and the toad, in effect, becomes female. True frogs have teeth, are typically smooth and moist-skinned, with large, powerful legs and extensively webbed feet, and when they eat, their eyes retract into their skull.

Phylum
ChordataClass
AmphibiaOrder
AnuraFamily
BufonidaeGenus
Anaxyrusspecies
A. americanus