



Bringing Wildlife Home

Amphibian Decline

Frogs, toads and salamanders are all types of amphibians. Amphibians normally hatch from eggs laid in or near water and begin life as aquatic larvae with gills. During adulthood, amphibians live mostly on land, often returning to the water to breed and hibernate.



The word "amphibian" is derived from the Greek words "amphi" and "bios," which together mean "two lives."

The Mystery of Amphibian Decline

- Historically, frogs and other amphibians are survivors. They lived through the last two extinction episodes, including the end of dinosaurs.
- At the 1989 First World Congress of Herpetology, scientists made a startling discovery and determined that amphibians were declining and disappearing all over the planet.
- In addition to widespread decline, there has been a high rate of amphibian deformities. Deformed amphibians are not a new phenomenon, but reports were not common until recently. Since 1995, reports have become increasingly common, and a number of scientists are looking for the cause.

Become part of the solution to amphibian decline. Create a Certified Wildlife Habitat, protect existing habitat, and participate in a scientific monitoring project such as Nature Quest™ FrogWatch USA.

What You Can Do to Help Amphibians

- **Protect existing habitat** - Help preserve habitat for frogs and other amphibians in your community by educating others about the importance of protecting existing natural surroundings, such as woodlands and wetlands, and how to keep your watershed healthy. To find your local watershed, visit the Environmental Protection



Agency's Surf Your Watershed website at cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm.

- **Landscape naturally** – Keep local streams and wetlands healthy. Create a **Certified Wildlife Habitat** landscape and encourage your neighbors to do the same. Together, your actions and the actions of others can make a difference in the health of your watershed.
- **Help scientists** – Become part of the solution to frog decline. Participate in a scientific monitoring project like National Wildlife Federation's **Nature Quest™ FrogwatchUSA** program. Data collected by volunteers becomes part of the global pool of information being used to understand why amphibians are disappearing and how we can save them. Visit www.nwf.org/frogwatchUSA for details.
- **Create a pond** – These easy to create water features add wonderful diversity to your yard and provide endless hours of entertainment and educational opportunities for you and your family. Backyard ponds attract beneficial wildlife soon after they are created. Furthermore, balanced backyard ponds rarely attract unusual numbers of mosquitoes. For tips on how to create your own pond, visit www.nwf.org/backyardpond.
- **Create or buy a toad abode** – A toad abode is a small ceramic house for toads. To create one yourself, turn a ceramic flowerpot upside down and, if it does not already have a toad-sized crack or hole in the side for an entrance, prop it up with a rock so the toad can get in and out. It is better not to have a floor in your toad abode because toads like to dig. Place your toad abode in a shady spot near a water source, such as a small pond or even a large saucer of water. For more information on toad abodes visit www.nwf.org/doteontoads.
- **Be on the lookout for invasive species** – Invasive frog species, such as the Cuban treefrog found in Florida, will eat native frogs and compete with them for food. Try to keep them out of your habitat. For additional information about invasive species in your state, visit www.invasivespecies.info.gov/unitedstates/state.shtml.



Visit www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife for more information.

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