

Frogs and Toads of the Atchafalaya Basin

True Toads



Fowler's Toad
(*Anaxyrus fowleri*)



Gulf Coast Toad
(*Incilius nebulifer*)

True Toads (Family Bufonidae)

Two true toads occur in the Atchafalaya Basin: Fowler's Toad and the Gulf Coast Toad. Both of these species are moderately sized and have dry, warty skin. They have short hind limbs and do not leap like other frogs, but rather they make short hops to get around. They are active primarily at night and use their short hind limbs for burrowing into sandy soils during the day. They are the only two frogs in the basin that lay long strings of eggs, as opposed to clumps laid by other frog species. Both of these toad species possess enlarged glands at the back of the head that secrete a white poison when attacked by a predator. When handling these toads, one should avoid putting their hands near their mouths or eyes, as these secretions may be irritating. Contrary to widespread belief, toads do not cause warts.

Microhylid Frogs and Toads (Family Microhylidae)

The Eastern Narrow-Mouthed Toad is the only representative in the Atchafalaya Basin of this family. It is a plump frog with smooth skin, a pointed snout, and short limbs. There is a fold of skin across the back of the head that can be moved forward to clear the eyes. They use this fold of skin especially when preying upon ants, a favorite food, to remove any attackers. Because of its plump body and short limbs the male must secrete a sticky substance from a gland on its stomach to stay attached to a female for successful mating; in most other frogs, the limbs are long enough to grasp around the female. The Eastern Narrow-Mouthed Toad usually stays out of sight during the day under moist cover, usually near water.

Microhylid Frogs and Toads



Eastern Narrow-Mouthed Toad
(*Gastrophryne carolinensis*)

Treefrogs and Their Allies



Blanchard's Cricket Frog
(*Acris blanchardi*)



Cajun Chorus Frog
(*Pseudacris fouquettei*)



Spring Peeper
(*Pseudacris crucifer*)



Green Treefrog
(*Hyla cinerea*)



Cope's Gray Treefrog
(*Hyla chrysoscelis*)

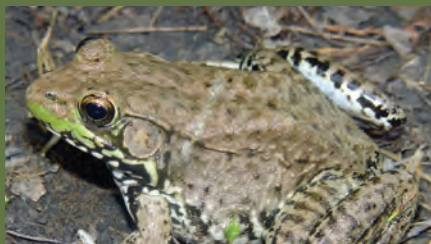


Squirrel Treefrog
(*Hyla squirella*)

True Frogs



American Bullfrog
(*Lithobates catesbeianus*)



Bronze Frog
(*Lithobates clamitans*)



Pig Frog
(*Lithobates grylio*)



Southern Leopard Frog
(*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*)

Treefrogs and Their Allies (Family Hylidae)

This large family of frogs is represented in the Atchafalaya Basin by six species. Blanchard's Cricket Frog is a small semiaquatic species most frequently found at the water's edge or on top of vegetation in the water. The Cajun Chorus Frog and Spring Peeper are slightly larger than Blanchard's Cricket Frog and are usually among the first species heard calling in winter and spring. These two species can and do climb vegetation but to a lesser degree than the generally larger Hyla species—Green, Cope's Gray, and Squirrel Treefrogs—in the basin, which have enlarged toe pads used for climbing. Green Treefrogs and Squirrel Treefrogs are the species most commonly seen attached to the doors, windows, and siding of buildings.

True Frogs (Family Ranidae)

Four species of true frogs can be found in the Atchafalaya Basin (American Bullfrog, Bronze Frog, Pig Frog, and Southern Leopard Frog). These semiaquatic frogs are all moderate to large in size, with long legs and narrow waists. They have webbing between the toes of the rear feet and smooth skin. Of the four species, the Pig Frog is the most aquatic, whereas the Southern Leopard Frog is nomadic and can sometimes be found far from water. American Bullfrogs and Bronze Frogs can typically be found at the water's edge. The American Bullfrog and Pig Frog are game species in Louisiana, and adults may be harvested for human consumption by approved methods in all months except April and May.