

Common Frogs and Toads

Common Frogs

Common frogs are amphibian, which means that they are able to live on land and water. They have a slimy, leathery skin that varies in colour from grey, olive green and yellow to brown. Their skin is dappled and spotted with dark blotches, striped around the eyes and eardrums, and there are dark bars on their legs. They are able to lighten or darken their skin to match their surroundings. Their webbed feet are an aid to swimming and their relatively long back legs enable them to jump several feet high.



This species is widespread in mainland Britain. Common frogs are most active at night, and hibernate during the winter in pond mud or under piles of rotting leaves, logs or stones. They can breathe through their skin as well as their lungs. They emerge to forage during warm spells of weather.

In spring, males croak to attract females. The male embraces a female and fertilises her eggs as she lays them in the form of spawn in shallow, still water - frogspawn is a familiar sight. Tadpoles hatch and can often be seen swimming near the edge of ponds and streams. Over about 16 weeks tadpoles gradually change into froglets: a process known as metamorphosis.

What they eat:

Adults eat snails, slugs, worms and insects. They catch flies with their long, sticky tongue. Young tadpoles feed on algae, but then become carnivorous.



Common Toads

Common toads are also amphibian. They vary from dark brown, grey and olive green to sandy-coloured. They have broad, squat bodies and warty skin. They tend to walk rather than hop, although like common frogs, they are also able to leap in the air with the aid of powerful back legs. These toads are widespread and common in mainland Britain.

Common toads excavate a shallow burrow that they return to after foraging for prey. They secrete an irritant substance, which can be poisonous to predators. Apart from



having a toxic skin, they can also puff themselves up to deter attack. Common toads tend to live away from water, except when mating, and hibernate during the winter in deep leaf litter typically beneath a tree or in a log pile.

Rainforests are a natural home.

During mating, the male clutches the female from behind in a tight embrace. He fertilises the long, triple-stranded strings of eggs as she lays them among the waterweeds. Tadpoles hatch after about 10 days and gradually change completely, or metamorphose, into toadlets over two to three months. Common toads can live up to around 10-12 years.

What they eat:

Similarly to frogs, toads eat insect larvae, spiders, slugs and worms. Larger toads may take slow worms, small grass snakes and even harvest mice.



Comprehension:

- 1) What characteristic of the common frog enables it to match its surroundings?
- 2) How do male frogs attract females?
- 3) How do common toads protect themselves from predators?
- 4) What is the typical diet of common frogs and toads?
- 5) Describe the typical habitat of common frogs and toads.



Wordsearch (from 'The Sunday Times' May 24th 2020)

WORDSEARCH

Can you find all of the listed items relating to frogs and toads in the grid? Words can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal, backwards or forwards.

K	J	X	T	C	Y	M	I	L	S	H	T	C	H	D	U	A
C	P	O	I	S	O	N	O	U	S	Q	H	O	E	U	M	J
E	A	A	N	T	E	C	R	P	B	I	A	L	N	P	E	U
D	L	S	G	E	L	R	A	R	L	N	P	S	H	G	K	M
R	W	O	I	E	S	E	O	A	P	P	E	I	H	N	U	P
Y	A	N	P	F	L	W	U	F	A	O	B	E	Y	S	C	E
L	R	S	E	D	N	R	I	D	N	I	N	R	S	P	A	O
I	T	T	E	E	A	S	N	M	A	I	E	D	E	O	A	K
R	Y	S	E	B	R	T	P	N	M	H	A	O	I	T	I	A
F	R	O	G	B	L	G	T	A	T	I	M	R	L	T	A	O
B	S	G	G	E	E	C	D	A	W	N	N	R	F	E	H	R
S	U	I	O	W	T	R	E	E	T	N	E	G	A	D	L	C
T	O	X	I	C	N	L	D	E	P	I	R	T	S	R	E	I

AMPHIBIAN

BROWN

CROAK

DAPPLED

EGGS

FLIES

FROG

GREEN

JUMP

LEAP

LEATHERY

LEGS

POISONOUS

POND

RAINFOREST

SLIMY

SPAWN

SPOTTED

STRIPED

SWIMMING

TADPOLE

TOAD

TONGUE

TOXIC

TREE

WARTY

WEBBED FEET



Ethnic Minority Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement

