

Frogs Are Calling!

Calls of frogs are one of many signs that springtime has truly arrived in Maine. Here are four frogs to listen and look for around your home or during your next visit to a Maine State Park or Public Land.

Spring Peeper

(Pseudacris crucifer)

Listen for: A high-pitched repeating peep call heard in the afternoon and throughout the evening during the breeding season. When a group of spring peepers is calling out together it sounds like a high-pitched "fried-rice, fried-rice, fried-rice" - the mnemonic for remembering their call.

- [Listen to spring peepers \(mp3 file\)](#)

Look for: A small orange-tan to tan-brown, smooth-skin frog with a dark 'X' on its back. Lighter belly and throat. Total length, nose tip to hind end, is 0.8 to 1.5 inches.

Spring Peeper Fun Facts:

- Maine's smallest frog.
- Crucifer, from its scientific name, means "cross bearer."
- Rapidly lightens or darkens skin color to match its surroundings.
- Males are slightly smaller than females.
- One of two kinds of tree frogs found in Maine.



Spring Peeper photo courtesy of David Preston.

Wood Frog

(Rana sylvatica)

Listen for: A quivering quacking call which may be confused with the sound of ducks. Group calling mnemonic = "Lick-em-up, lick-em-up, lick-em-up" in a mid-tone quavering voice. Think about the sounds of ducks as you try it.

- [Listen to wood frogs \(mp3 file\)](#)

Look for: A light brown frog with a thick, dark brown stripe (mask) below and behind each eye, and a raised ridge (dorso-lateral fold) extending from behind each eye down the back to the frog's hind end. Total length, tip of nose to hind end, is no more than 2.4 inches.

Wood Frog Fun Facts:

- The first of Maine's frogs to appear in springtime as they move from land to ponds to breed.
- Survives being frozen for up to two days.
- Shape of the hind toe webs are used to determine males from females. The webs curve outwards (convex shaped) in males, and curve inwards (concave shaped) in females.



Wood frog photo courtesy of the Maine Natural Areas Program.

Green Frog

(Rana clamitans)

Listen for: A plunking rubber-band banjo-like call.

Mnemonic = “Gunk, gunk-gunk-gunk.”

- [Listen to green frogs \(mp3 file\)](#)

Look for: A green to greenish-brown frog with two back ridges (dorso-lateral folds), many dark spots, and several dark bands across its legs. Total length, tip of nose to hind end, is between 2.5 and 4 inches.

Green Frog Fun Facts:

- Rana, from its scientific name, means “loud crier.” Green frogs announce danger with a loud squeak call.
- Always stays close to water: ponds, streams, swamps.
- The circle-shaped ear membrane (tympanum) is larger in males than females. In males it is larger around that the eye. Look for the tympanum just behind and slightly below each eye.



Green frog photo courtesy of Trevor Persons.

American Bullfrog

(Rana catesbeiana)

Listen for: A deep-voiced and loud “RUM” call. Or in a series: “rum-rum, rum-rum” - the mnemonic for remembering their call.

- [Listen to bull frogs \(mp3 file\)](#)
(Bull frogs calling, then green frogs chime in, and then a whip-poor-will joins in.)

Look for: A large green to olive-brown frog with a light throat and belly. Back ridges (dorso-lateral folds) extend only from the back of the eye to around the back edge of the ear membrane (tympanum).

American Bullfrog Fun Facts:

- Largest frog in Maine, as well as in the United States. May reach almost 8 inches in length, from tip of nose to hind end.
- Tadpoles overwinter in muddy pond-bottoms their first year; mature to adults during second season.
- As with green frogs, the circle-shaped ear membrane (tympanum) is larger in males than females.
- Males throats are yellow, varying in brightness.



American bullfrog photo courtesy of Trevor Persons.

Activities for Children & the Young at Heart

- 1. Can you sing out like a spring peeper and then a wood frog?**
(HINT: use the mnemonic for each provided above.)
- 2. What call would you make if you were a new kind of a frog?**
Share this call with others, then start a frog chorus of many types of frogs calling together.
- 3. Draw a picture of yourself as a frog.**
Can you swim, climb trees, or make great leaps? What parts of your body help you to move as you do?

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- [Jocelyn Hubbell](#), Interpretive Specialist, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.