

## Greene County Parks Frog Fun and Facts

*Written by Mel Grosvenor, Greene County Parks Naturalist*

What group of animals includes species that can change color, are poisonous, and can freeze, yet come back to life? Frogs! Ohio is home to fifteen species of these amazing amphibians. Nine species of frogs may be found in Greene County and include: Green Frog, Bullfrog, Spring Peeper, Blanchard's Cricket Frog, Gray Treefrog, Northern Leopard Frog, Western Chorus Frog, American Toad and Fowler's Toad.



You may not see them, but you probably hear frogs now that spring is here. Don't expect to hear any of our frogs saying "ribbit" because none do. A frog near Hollywood, California says that. His call was recorded and incorrectly used as a general frog sound in movies. Ohio frogs make a wide variety of sounds. Wood Frogs sound like ducks. Spring Peepers "peep" like birds, Blanchard's Cricket Frogs sound like two marbles clicking together and Northern Leopard Frogs sound like woodpeckers. All of these sounds attract females to watery breeding areas.

Frogs have many adaptations to help them survive. One species with cool adaptations is called the Gray Treefrog, however it can be green or brown when it changes color. No matter what overall color they are, Gray Treefrogs always have bright orange to yellow coloring on the undersides of their legs. If a hungry animal spots them, these frogs will jump and flash that color to warn the predator to leave them alone. Bright colors can mean that an animal is poisonous. They are not poisonous, however they do have an irritating skin secretion. Never handle one of these frogs and then rub your eyes. It burns!

Toads are the poisonous ones. They do not cause warts, however the two largest bumps behind their eyes are poison glands. If bothered excessively, a white, milky poison will ooze out from those glands. This is generally used as a last resort. If you come into contact with the poison, simply wash your hands. It is not potent enough to harm humans if it is ingested.

Wood Frogs have the incredible ability to freeze in the winter time. Special antifreeze compounds in their bodies protect their vital organs and allow them to survive periods of freezing and thawing throughout the winter. During winter they have no heartbeat and are not breathing. By definition, these frogcicles should be dead. When rain arrives in late winter they magically thaw out and come back to life.

To learn more about these amazing amphibians, join a Greene County Parks naturalist for Frog Fun at Sara Lee Arnovitz Preserve on Sunday, April 26 at 1 p.m. This is a free hike and the preserve is located at 350 Kinsey Road in Xenia. For additional information on Frog Fun or for other information about Greene County Parks, please contact the administrative office at 937-562-7440 or visit the website at [www.co.greene.oh.us/parks](http://www.co.greene.oh.us/parks).