

# Southern Toad

Scientific Name: *Bufo terrestris*



## Did You Know?

- Contrary to popular folklore, toads do not cause warts! And kissing one will not turn it into a prince. However, toad skin is used medicinally in China - it contains the hormone adrenalin.
- Adult Southern toads are most active at twilight, commonly found foraging for insects throughout the night. They spend their days in burrows that they create. Juveniles can be seen at almost any time of the day or night.
- To escape hot dry periods, they often burrow beneath the ground. Conversely, during rainy weather, they are very active above ground, especially at night when numbers of toads may be seen on the roadways.
- Some people call these common creatures "hop toads" and they do indeed move about in short hops rather than long leaps.
- Toads have many defenses against predation; they produce a toxin in the parotid glands behind the eyes. It is only harmful if it is ingested or rubbed into the eyes. This toxin can make animals very sick. Some animals such as garter snakes are not harmed by this poison, so instead the toad puffs itself up with air to look bigger and to prevent the snake from swallowing it. It also urinates, but this really doesn't do any harm. It just makes it unappetizing to the predator.
- Toads emerge from hibernation and fill the night air with long, trilling calls in the spring. Toads are among the last amphibians to hibernate each fall and may be seen into mid-November.

# Chattahoochee NATURE CENTER

# General Information on the Southern Toad

## IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

About 1.5-3" (4.1-7.5 cm) in length. Three main identifying characteristics: 1) One or two warts in each of the dark spots; 2) Two large knobs that resemble horns when in profile; and 3) Crests that run forward from the knobs narrow as they approach the snout. Bodies are typically brown, but can vary from reddish to black. A very faint mid-dorsal stripe can sometimes be seen, disappearing before it reaches the hindlegs.

## RANGE

From southeast Virginia to the Florida Keys through the Atlantic coastal plain, and inland as far as western Mississippi and parts of southern Louisiana.

## HABITAT

Sandy areas such as shores of lakes or ponds, and in river valleys.

## BREEDING

They breed during the spring months in shallow water. Their high-pitched trill is almost an octave higher than that of the American toad. The call ranges from 2-8 seconds and is very rapid, with some as frequent as 75 trills per second. They are most commonly heard from March to October.

## FEEDING HABITS:

Toads eat anything small that they can fit into their mouths, which are mostly insects and various other invertebrates. Toads actually snap food up with their tongues instead of pouncing on their prey with their mouths open like many types of frogs do. Toads may use their hands and front legs to push large food items into their mouths. They are very valuable as controllers of insect pests.