



Reptiles & Amphibians IN OUR COMMUNITY

OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY

OVERVIEW OF AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

AMPHIBIANS

- Vertebrates (have a backbone)
- Live in water and on land
- Use sun or shade to warm up or cool off (ectothermic)
- No scales and have wet smooth or bumpy skin
- May have 4 legs or develop them later
- Found on every continent except Antarctica
- No species in the sea
- Eggs are like jelly
- Initially gills to breathe in water
- Adults form lungs or some species breathe only through skin, so get sick in polluted water.
- Amphibians make a chorus of mating calls in a pond or wetland.

REPTILES

- Vertebrates (have a backbone)
- Live in water and on land
- Use sun or shade to warm up or cool off (ectothermic)
- Have scales and have dry skin
- Some have 4 legs; some do not
- Found on every continent except Antarctica
- Some live only in water
- Eggs have a hard or leathery shell and hatchlings can move at birth
- Scales protect them from many pollutants and help those who live in salt water.
- Make sounds like hiss, grunt and roar.

TOADS & FROGS IN THE BAY AREA

FROGS

- Smooth, moist, dull skin
- Can breathe through their lungs or skin underwater
- Can be green, yellow or brown
- May have a distinct brown patch behind the eye
- Springy leaps and lay eggs in clumps
- Eat a lot of beetles, bugs, woodlice, slugs and snails



Foothill Yellow-legged Frog



American Bullfrog



Pacific Chorus Frog

TOADS

- Have dry, warty skin, which means they can't 'breathe' through their skin as well as frogs, but they can survive on land in drier places
- Are usually grey-brown
- Crawl rather than hop
- Lay strings of eggs in rows
- May have a yellow stripe down their back
- Can run fast
- Like to eat ants



Western (California) Toad



California Red Legged Frog (Calaveras Jumping Frog)

Lizards



California legless lizard



Western fence lizard



Western skink



California alligator lizard



Mediterranean house gecko

Local Lizards

- Western fence lizard
- California alligator lizard
- California legless lizard
- Mediterranean gecko
- Common side-blotched lizard
- Western skink

- Over 60 types of lizards live in California and there are about 6,000 species of lizards worldwide.
- The Western fence lizard, also known as the blue belly, is both predator and prey. They eat large numbers of insects, spiders and arthropods, but are prey for raptors, snakes and some mammals. A certain protein in these lizards' blood kills the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. When ticks feed on a western fence lizard, the Lyme infection is cleared from the tick and therefore cannot be passed on to us humans.
- Lizards have dry, scaly skin, four legs with clawed feet, external ear openings, and eyelids. Most lizards run over the ground.
- Lizards are usually beneficial in your garden because they eat insects and don't harm your plants.

- Lizards can be pets, but they prefer to be outside.
- Lizards, if handled, need a gentle touch or they can get upset and bite with sharp little teeth.
- All but one lizard in the United States are nonpoisonous. The only poisonous one is the Gila monster that lives in parts of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico, centered in Arizona and southern Sonora, Mexico. Occasionally, a Gila monster may be seen in southwestern Utah, southern Nevada, southeastern California, and southwestern New Mexico. The Gila monster is primarily found in desert scrub and rocky canyons.
- If a lizard makes a wrong turn into your house, since they only need about ¼ inch opening to enter. Please gently try to scoot the lizard back outside.



TURTLES



Western Pond Turtle and Threats from Introduced Species

- The only native freshwater turtle in the area is the Western pond turtle. Their existence is threatened by non-native turtles who move into turtle habitats because by people who may have had them as pets before releasing them into the lakes and streams.
- The Red-eared slider can be found in the area, but is not a native species.
- The Western pond turtle has been spotted in Lake Elizabeth, Tilden Nature Area, Sunol Regional Wilderness, and several county parks near the south bay.
- Non-native species compete for habitats and may introduce disease.
- Turtles also are at risk from many predators like raccoons, coyotes, skunks, snakes, crows, and other birds of prey that eat the eggs and small hatchlings.

Conservation and How to Help

- Help with habitat protection and clean up.
- Turtles sometimes are moved from areas impacted by construction.
- Volunteer with the East Bay Regional Park District's "Doc Quack's Wildlife Volunteers" or other conservation groups to help with research and conservation.
- Help biologists monitor the health of local turtles with projects at the San Francisco Zoo, Oakland Zoo, Alameda County Resource Conservation District and other local organizations helping with pond restoration and protection.
- Make sure not to release pets and educate others about the risk to local wildlife if pets are taking over their habitats and food sources.
- Observe wildlife from a distance and join citizen science groups to report sightings in residential areas.
- Keep garbage contained and eliminate food left outdoors to protect habitats and animal health.

SNAKES

- A local organization lists almost 20 different snakes living in the San Francisco Bay Area, mostly not dangerous to humans..
- These snakes include a few species of striped racers, common kingsnakes, gopher snakes, and garter snakes.
- The snake that can give a toxic bite that is found in this area is the Western Rattlesnake.
- Although these snakes are native (found naturally) to our area, people who study snakes, called herpetologists, report that snakes who normally are not found here have been introduced most likely by pet traders.
- Some species spread to many states from the escape or breeding of just a few snakes of a new species.
- Introduced animals and plants can make it difficult for the new and old species to survive.



California Garter Snake



Rattlesnake



Pacific Gopher Snake



California Kingsnake

WHAT ARE THEY TELLING US?

BODY LANGUAGE OF REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS



RELAXED
basking for
temperature
regulation



ALERT

Raising head,
head bobbing,
tasting with tongue



LEAVE ALONE

Hissing, tail
flicking,, raises up
to look bigger

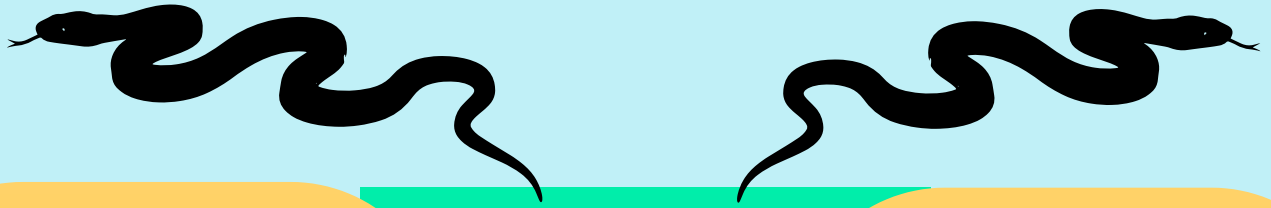


CONTENT

Enjoys being with
others of its
species



INJURED REPTILES OR AMPHIBIANS TO HELP OR NOT? CALL A WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR



BETTER LEFT ALONE?

- Sometimes it's best to leave amphibians and reptiles in the garden to recover from a mild injury on their own.
- However, if the animal is seriously sick or injured, then contact a veterinarian or wildlife rehabilitator. If you contact a veterinarian, make sure they often treat reptiles and amphibians before you go there.
- Before moving a sick or injured reptile or amphibian, contact the veterinarian or rehabilitator for advice.
- While waiting for advice, see **How to Help** on this page.
- If you see sick, injured or dead amphibians in your garden, please ask a wildlife rehabilitator for recommendations to keep backyard animals healthy.
- Do not release the animal into a new area, even if it seems injured.
- Unfortunately, sick or injured wild animals generally are not in good shape by the time they can be caught and the vet or rehabilitator may recommend putting the animal to sleep to relieve its suffering.



**Children
should not
attempt to
rescue a wild
injured or
baby animal.**

**Adults should
contact a
wildlife
rehabilitator
for advice!**

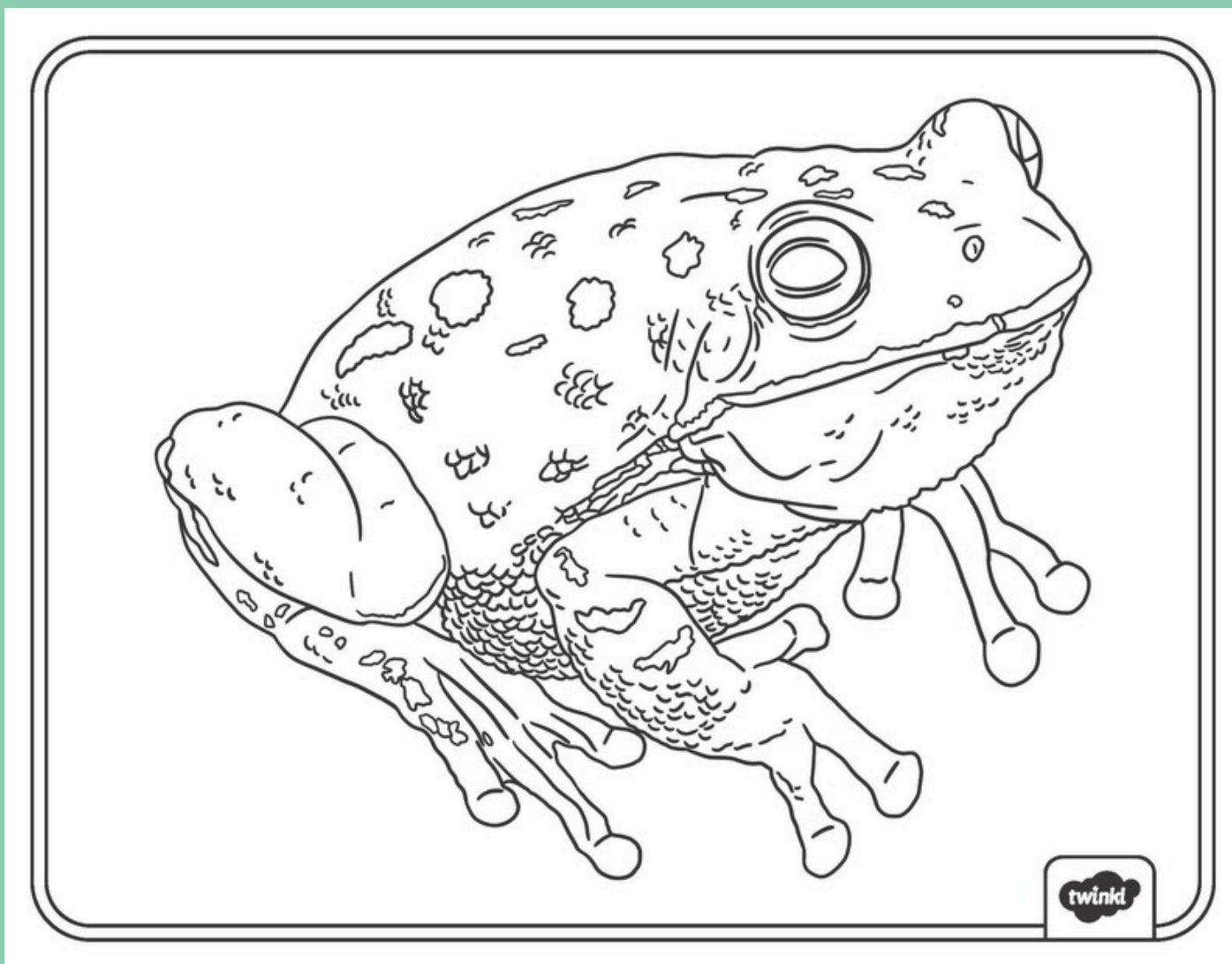
**Also see
[Found a
Reptile](#)**

HOW TO HELP

- You should be able to confine frogs and toads without having to touch them directly - this will help reduce their stress.
- Approach the animal slowly and quietly, and place a box on top of them, then carefully slide the box lid or a piece of cardboard underneath so you can pick the box up.
- Make sure the box has holes for ventilation, and line it with damp paper towels to keep their skin moist and lined with a soft cloth that doesn't have loops, like a t-shirt.
- Don't use newspaper to line the box, as the chemicals from the ink could harm them.
- Keep the box somewhere that's not too hot and away from pets, and take them to a vet or rehabilitator for treatment as soon as possible.
- Only handle amphibians if you can't avoid it. Always wear disposable gloves and rinse the gloves with water before you pick up the animal.
- Don't touch them with bare hands as they are very sensitive to chemicals on our skin. Also, some reptiles and amphibians carry salmonella bacteria, so it's important to wash hands after handling or cleaning their living area.
- Do not offer food or water, which can be harmful if given incorrectly.
- Keep the box in a dark, quiet place away from pets and children.
- Provide supplemental heat if instructed, such as placing a heating pad set on low underneath one-half of the box. Do not place the heating pad directly on the animal.

Remember wildlife are not pets. To help make the best decision for the animals, contact a licensed and trained wildlife rehabilitator. Their ultimate goal is to rehab wildlife to be release back to nature

DO YOU THINK THE PICTURE SHOWS A REPTILE OR AMPHIBIAN? CAN YOU COLOR IT?



**SAVE OUR
WILDLIFE!**

**EDUCATE
OTHERS!**

*Keep our
wildlife wild!*

*Rescue a reptile
or amphibian
who cannot
return to the
wild!*