

# Amphibian Calling Survey Summary 2011



Grey Tree Frog, Photo by: Jerry Cannon

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## **Introduction**

Metro Park volunteers were trained in February. At the training session, volunteers learned which frogs and toads can be found in Metro Parks, how to identify them (Appendix A) and how to recognize frog and toad vocalizations (They received an audio recording of the vocalizations). Volunteers were trained on and received a copy of the frog monitoring protocol (Appendix B). They received frog monitoring data sheets (Appendix C) and were assigned one or more maps of wetlands to monitor in the Metro Parks.

Throughout the summer, Metro Park's observations were entered into the Frogwatch USA database. These results can be viewed at the Frogwatch USA web site:

<http://www.mp2pwr.usgs.gov/FrogWatch/CustomPages/Results/state.cfm>.

## **Results**

Forty-nine sites were assigned this season to be monitored, ten more than in 2010. However, only data for only 47 sites were reported. The species distribution is represented in Figure 1. Spring Peepers were the most widely distributed species (34 sites) with green frogs being a close second at 32 sites.

Gray tree frogs are also relatively common, found in 22 sites in 2011. On the other hand, pickerel frogs were not documented at any wetland site in 2011. In past years, they have been documented at Liberty Park, Clinton Towpath and Silver Creek. These sites were surveyed in 2011. However, the species may exist in too small of numbers to document readily using the survey protocol. Another possibility is that the pickerel frogs are utilizing the survey sites on an infrequent basis because it is not their preferred habitat.

In past years, the northern leopard frog has been recorded in Liberty Park, Silver Creek and the Bike and Hike Trail at Young Road and Clinton Towpath. In 2011, they were recorded at four sites including two in Silver Creek, Bike and Hike at Young Road and the newly surveyed Confluence Metro Park.

Western chorus frogs were documented at 12 sites surveyed this season. They were recorded in four of the 7 new sites monitored in 2011 including sites in Maple Grove, Confluence Metro Park and Springfield Bog Metro Park.

Figure 1. Species distribution among 49 sites surveyed within Metro Parks, Serving Summit County in 2011.

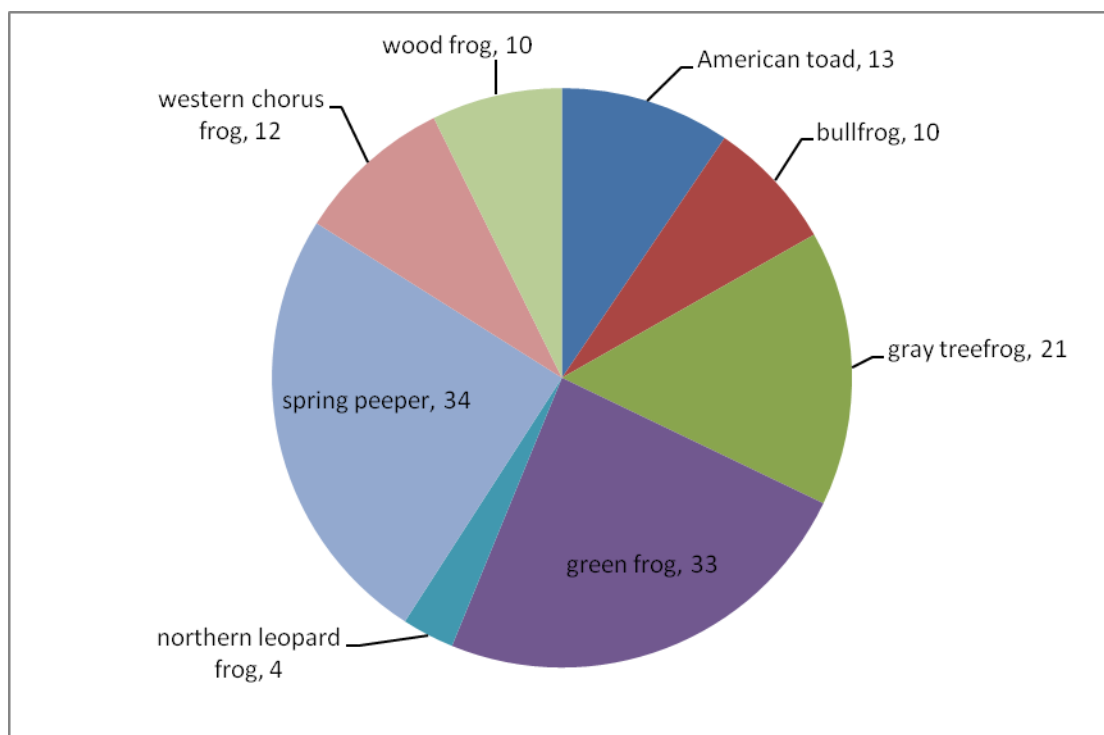


Table 1 is below. It documents the occurrence of each species at each survey site during 2011. The number of surveys performed, as well as, the number of months the site was visited is also recorded. This helps explain why a particular species may not be documented for a site from year to year. For example, if the observer did not visit the site in March, they may not have heard wood frogs.

Volunteers are asked to survey their assigned site once a month from March through July. They are encouraged to check their site in February so that western chorus frogs and wood frogs are not misrepresented. Often times however, volunteers are unable to complete surveys each month. This often accounts for the low species diversity documented at a particular site.

The number in each box under the species columns demonstrates the number of times the species was recorded during the survey season. The number reflected here is influenced by the number of surveys completed by volunteers. Therefore, it may be artificially high if a volunteer visits the site several times a month and records a particular species over and over. However, this feature does help monitor trends in species activity. For example, notice that wood frogs and chorus frogs are not recorded more than two times at any give site. This reflects their life history strategy. Both species visit vernal pools early in the season, are explosive breeders and then retreat from those pools for the remainder of the season.

Table 1.

Site #	Site Name	Number Observations	Months Surveys	western chorus frog	spring peeper	wood frog	northern leopard frog	pickrel frog	American toad	Fowler's toad	gray treefrog	northern cricket frog	green frog	bullfrog
1445	SENECA POND	5	3										5	2
1446	ECHO POND	6	3						1				4	
1447	HERB POND	6	4						3				4	
1450	HERON POND	10	5		6								5	
1451	BEAVER POND	7	5		3								4	1
1452	MAPLE BEACH	10	5		4	1			2					
1453	LITTLE TURTLE POND	15	5										7	2
1454	LONESOME POND	6	5										2	
1455	ALDER POND	6	4		2				1		2		3	2
1456	MEDINA LINE RD	7	5		4						4		1	
1457	PHEASANT RUN	6	4		1		1						2	2
1458	PARKWAY POND	15	6		3		1				4		5	2
1460	LOCK 28	1	1	1										
1461	TOWPATH TRAIL	7	5	3										
1462	QUARRY	13	6	1							1			
1463	OXBOW	1	1		1									
1464	CHUCKERY	15	5	2	7				2		3		6	
1465	PARKWAY	7	4		3								2	
1466	BIKE AND HIKE	7	5		4	2					1		3	
1467	A-P RD	11	5		3	2					3		4	
1468	TOP O' THE WORLD	11	5		6						6		7	2
1469	MINGO	2	2											
1470	MERRIMAN	12	5		6				1		6		8	
1471	BIG BEND	11	4		5				1		4		3	
1472	BRUSHWOOD	8	4						3	1			3	3
1473	BOG IRON POND 2	10	5		5								2	
1868	COVENTRY OAKS	18	5	3	7				1		7		9	4
1870	INDIAN TRAIL	9	5		6	2							3	
2944	PARKWAY 2A	12	5		6						1		1	
2945	VERNAL POOL	4	3	1	2	1							1	
3411	BIG BEND 1	5	4		2						1		2	
3412	BIG BEND 2	5	4		2						2		2	
3414	NORTON RD	7	5		3				1		1		3	
3417	TOWPATH	2	1	1	1									
3559	WETMORE RD	7	5		5								2	
4330	CLINTON ROOKERY	4	3		2	1							1	
4332	YOUNG RD	9	5		7	1	1		1		3		3	1
5771	VERNAL POOL	7	4			2								
7164	BRINE INJECTION SITE	3	3	1	2						1			
8101	MAPLE GROVE WETLAND	3	2		1						1			
8120	CONFLUENCE PARK VERNAL POOL	10	4	1	3		1		4		3		5	
8121	CONFLUENCE PARK PHRAGMITES	4	4	2	1						1			
8220	NR WETLAND COMPLEX	1	1										1	
8310	SPRINGFIELD BOG PENINSULA	2	2	2	2									
8311	SPRINGFIELD BOG WETLAND	2	2	1	2	1								
8400	BATH ROAD HERON ROOKERY	6	4		1	3			2	2	3	3	3	

## **Conclusion**

The amphibian calling survey will continue in 2012. No new sites will likely be added to the program unless a need arises through property acquisitions.

Appendix A  
Northeastern Ohio Frog and Toads

- 1) Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*)      length:  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  in
  - a) prefer open fields and prairies with dense vegetation.
  - b) emerge from hibernation very early in late winter or early spring, and begin calling one to several days before spring peepers and wood frogs from vegetation in or around shallow pools or ditches.
  - c) breeding season: late-February through early-May
  - d) call similar to the sound made by rubbing one's finger over the teeth of a hard plastic comb.
- 2) Spring Peeper (*Hyla crucifer*)      length:  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  in
  - a) The size of a dime, they have a prominent dark "X" on their back, as well as rounded treefrog toe pads
  - b) After the breeding season, peepers move upland to moist woodlands where they spent the rest of their time.
  - c) Breeding season: March through late-May
  - d) Call sounds like a shrill, birdlike peep or whistle repeated about once per second. Chorus of many peepers sounds like sleigh bells.
- 3) Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*)      length: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  in
  - a) Northern distribution, lives farther north than any other North American amphibian or reptile.
  - b) Prefers moist woodlands to ponds
  - c) Breeding season: mid-March through early-April
  - d) Call is a series of five or six explosive clucking notes – r-r-racket, r-r-racket, r-r-racket...
- 4) Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*)      length: 2-3  $\frac{1}{2}$  in
  - a) Named for the black leopard spots on their back, sides, and legs.
  - b) Habitat ranges from margins of lakes and rivers to marshes and wet meadows.
  - c) Breeding season: late-March through early-May
  - d) Call is a low, guttural grunting like the sound produced by rubbing a thumb over a balloon
- 5) Pickerel Frog (*Rana palustris*)      length: 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 3 in
  - a) Similar in appearance to leopard frog, but is slightly smaller, tends to light brown instead of green, and has two rows of squarish rather than roundish spots running down its back.
  - b) Favor the cool, clear water of streams over ponds and lakes
  - c) Breeding season: late-March through early-May
  - d) Call is a harsh, descending snore of about 2-second duration (the call of the leopard frog is more extended)

Appendix A

- 6) American toad (*Bufo americanus*)      length: 2 – 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  in
  - a) Common from urban backyards to remote woodlands. In spring they congregate in large numbers in just about every available shallow breeding pond
  - b) Often hybridizes with Fowler's toad
  - c) Breeding season: early-April through June
  - d) Call is a long, dreamlike, musical trill averaging from 10-15 seconds long
- 7) Fowler's toad (*Bufo woodhousii fowleri*)      length: 2-3 in
  - a) Range throughout the state and generally prefers the same habitats as the American toad

- b) Breeding season: late-April through early-July
  - c) Call is an unmusical, nasal w-a-a-a-h lasting from one to four seconds (shorter in duration than the American toad)
- 8) Gray Treefrog (*Hyla versicolor*) length: 1 ¼ – 2 in
- a) Largest treefrog in the northern states
  - b) Changes colors from a gray-green to a light pearl-gray depending on its background
  - c) Spend most of time in trees except during breeding season when they congregate in masses in ponds
  - d) Breeding season: late-April through late-July
  - e) Call is short, melodic trill lasting about one-half second and repeated every few seconds
- 9) Cricket Frog (*Acris crepitans*) length: ½ - 1 ½ in
- a) Mostly found in western half of Ohio, where they inhabit weed-choked permanent ponds and streams.
  - b) A small, warty frog that are poor climbers, but can leap an extraordinary distance
  - c) Breeding season: early-May through early-July
  - d) Call is a vibrant series of metallic clicking notes that sound like 2 marbles being tapped together in rapid succession
- 10) Green Frog (*Rana clamitans*) length: 2 ¼ - 3 ½ in
- a) Very aquatic, abundant throughout Ohio along the edges of ponds, lakes, streams, and other permanent bodies of water.
  - b) Starts calling long after most other frogs have finished breeding
  - c) Breeding season: early-May through mid-July
  - d) Call is an explosive, throaty *gunk!* Or *gung!*, similar to the sound made by plucking a loose banjo string
- 11) Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) length: 3 ½ - 6 in
- a) Largest frog in North America
  - b) Similar in appearance to the green frog except the green frog is smaller and has two pronounced ridges down the back which are absent in bullfrogs.
  - c) In males the tympanum (or eardrum) is much larger than the eye, while in females it is equal to or smaller than the eye.
  - d) Found throughout Ohio in ponds, marshes, and large slow-moving streams
  - e) Breeding season: mid-May through late-July
  - f) Call is deep, resonant “jug-o-rum” or “rumm...rumm...rumm”.
- 12) Spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) length: 4 ¼ - 8 ¼ in
- a) There are actually many more species of salamanders in Ohio than frogs, 26 as compared to 14 species of frogs and toads, but salamanders are voiceless and more secretive.
  - b) They spend daylight hours hiding beneath rocks or logs, but during their breeding season many species of salamanders move about and congregate in masses at their breeding ponds.
  - c) Spotted salamanders are one of the common species of salamander that you may run across on warm, moist, early spring nights.
- 13) Jefferson salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*) length: 4 ¾ - 8 in
- a) You may also encounter the Jefferson salamander while you are listening for frogs.
  - b) This species, like the spotted salamander, also migrates to shallow woodland ponds to breed in the early spring.

- c) If you notice salamanders at any of your frog survey sites, please count them and note the observation on your data sheet.

14) Salamander eggs

- a) Also, if you happen to notice any amphibian egg masses in any of the wetlands you are monitoring, please note these as well, but do not disturb them.
- b) Salamander eggs are about fist-sized and are usually attached to a submerged stick or plant.



## Frog and Toad Monitoring Protocol

- 1) Monitor your wetland at least once per month (March through July). Once or twice a week would be best, though. Different frog species call at different times of the year.
  - Western Chorus Frog (late-February through early-May)
  - Spring Peeper (March through late-May)
  - Woodfrog (mid-March through early-April)
  - Northern Leopard Frog (late-March through early-May)
  - Pickerel Frog (late-March through early-May)
  - American Toad (early-April through June)
  - Fowler's Toad (late-April through early-July)
  - Gray Treefrog (late-April through late-July)
  - Cricket Frog (early-May through early-July)
  - Green Frog (early-May through mid-July)
  - Bullfrog (mid-May through late-July)
- 2) **Before you monitor frogs make sure that:**
  - The air temperature is at least 35°F.
  - It isn't raining too hard to hear frogs calling.
  - The wind is not stronger than 3 according to the Beaufort Wind Scale (>12 mph).
- 3) Make sure that you bring the necessary equipment (data sheet and clipboard, pencil or pen, flashlight, thermometer, watch) each time you monitor your assigned wetland.
- 4) Arrive at your wetland around sundown, so you can take notes about changes to the site. **You can start listening for frogs 30 minutes after sunset or later.**

*Remember to keep a distance between you and the wetland. This will ensure that the breeding area is left undisturbed.*

- 5) Record the weather information that is asked for on the data sheet.
  - Air Temperature
  - Wind Speed (using the Beaufort Wind Scale)
  - Current Precipitation
  - Weather History
- 6) **Stay quiet for a couple of minutes before starting to listen for frogs and toads.** Remain as quiet as possible during this time so you don't disturb the frogs and toads – they may stop calling if you make too much noise.
- 7) When you are ready, cup your hands around your ears and listen for exactly 3 minutes. After 3 minutes, record:
  - The time you started listening.
  - The time you stopped.
  - The different species that you heard.
  - The calling intensity for *each species separately*, use the calling index.

- 8) You can start over if you are disturbed – for example, an airplane flies overhead or a car drives past you. Just remember to change the time you started on your data sheet.
- 9) If you aren't sure about what you are hearing, bring your recording of frog and toad calls with you for a reference. If you are unable to identify a call, you could record what you are hearing at your site and send the recording or bring the recording to Marlo Perdicas or a Metro Parks Naturalist.
- 10) If you see evidence of disturbance to your wetland or other amphibians near your wetland, such as salamanders moving across land to breeding ponds in the spring, please note your observations in the notes sections of your data sheet.
- 11) Send, fax, email or bring your data sheets to Marlo Perdicas 975 Treaty Line Rd. Akron, OH 44313, email: [mperdicas@summitmetroparks.org](mailto:mperdicas@summitmetroparks.org), fax: (330) 865-8068.
- 12) You don't have to report your data after every visit, but you should send your data as often as possible so that your observations can be analyzed.

## Appendix C



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time Start \_\_\_\_\_ Time End \_\_\_\_\_

Site Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Weather Conditions:

Air Temperature \_\_\_\_\_ °F Wind Speed (Circle an appropriate value of the Beaufort Scale below):

**0                  1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

Precipitation during visit:      *None*      *Fog/Mist*      *Light Rain/Drizzle*      *Medium Rain*      *Hard Rain*      *Hail*      *Snow*

Has there been precipitation in the past 48 hours?      *No Precipitation*      *Some Precipitation*      *Much Precipitation*

The temperature during the past 48 hours has primarily been:      *Above Freezing*      *Below Freezing*

### Frog and Toad Observations:

Species	Calling Intensity				Notes
<b>Western Chorus Frog</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>Spring Peeper</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>Wood Frog</b>	0	1	2	3	
Northern Leopard Frog	0	1	2	3	
Pickering Frog	0	1	2	3	
<b>American Toad</b>	0	1	2	3	
Fowler's Toad	0	1	2	3	
<b>Gray Treefrog</b>	0	1	2	3	
Cricket Frog	0	1	2	3	
<b>Green Frog</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>Bullfrog</b>	0	1	2	3	
Other	0	1	2	3	

Other notes \_\_\_\_\_

### Beaufort Wind Scale:

Beaufort Wind Scale	Wind Speed (mph)	Description
0	< 1	CALM: smoke rises vertically
1	1-3	LIGHT AIR: rising smoke drifts; weathervane inactive
2	4-7	LIGHT BREEZE: leaves rustle; can feel wind on face
3	8-12	GENTLE BREEZE: leaves and twigs in constant motion; small flags extend
4	13-18	MODERATE BREEZE: moves small branches; raises dust and loose paper ( <b>too windy to monitor</b> )
5	19-24	FRESH BREEZE: small trees begin to sway ( <b>way too windy to monitor</b> )

### Calling Intensity:

Calling Intensity Code	Description
0	No frogs or toads can be heard calling.
1	You can clearly hear all individuals of a species and can count them easily; individual calls are not overlapping.
2	There is some overlap of calls between individuals of a species, but individuals are still distinguishable; a fairly accurate count is possible, based on location of the calls or differences in their voices.
3	A full chorus; calls for a species are a blur of sound; calls are constant, continuous, and overlapping; there are too many to estimate the number of individuals.

Submit your data forms to Marlo Perdicas 975 Treaty Line Rd. Akron OH 44313, Phone: 330 923-0720, fax: 330-867-4711 email: [mperdicas@summitmetroparks.org](mailto:mperdicas@summitmetroparks.org)