

# Amphibian Calling Survey Summary 2008



Chorusing Spring Peeper, 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.mp2pwwrc.usgs.gov/FrogWatch/CustomPages/Results/state.cfm>.

## **Results**

Thirty-nine sites were assigned this season to be monitored. The species distribution is represented in Figure 1. Spring peepers continue to be the most widely distributed species throughout the Metro Parks, detected at 31 sites in 2008. Green frogs were the next most widely distributed species (29 sites) followed by American toad (17). Gray tree frogs were documented in 26 sites in 2006, but only 17 sites in 2007. In 2008, they were documented in 16 sites. American toads were only found in 17 sites in 2008.

Pickerel frogs continue to be the least widely distributed frog in the Metro Parks. For the past three years, it has only been detected in Liberty Park. Sites at Liberty Park were not well represented this year and pickerel frogs were not detected. However, this species was detected in Silver Creek Metro Park and Munroe Falls Metro Park.

In past years, the northern leopard frog has only been detected at Liberty Park. In 2007, they were also found along the Bike and Hike Trail near Young Road and in Silver Creek Metro Park. While not detected in 2008 in Silver Creek, they were recorded again at Young Road. Liberty Park was not adequately surveyed this year.

Bullfrogs were detected at 11 sites in 2008, one more than last year. The number of sites harboring western chorus frogs remains low. This species occurred at fourteen sites in 2004, but at only seven sites during 2005 and 2006. 2007 yielded only 6 sites with western chorus frog activity, and again in 2008.

Figure 1. Species distribution among 39 sites surveyed within Metro Parks, Serving Summit County in 2008.

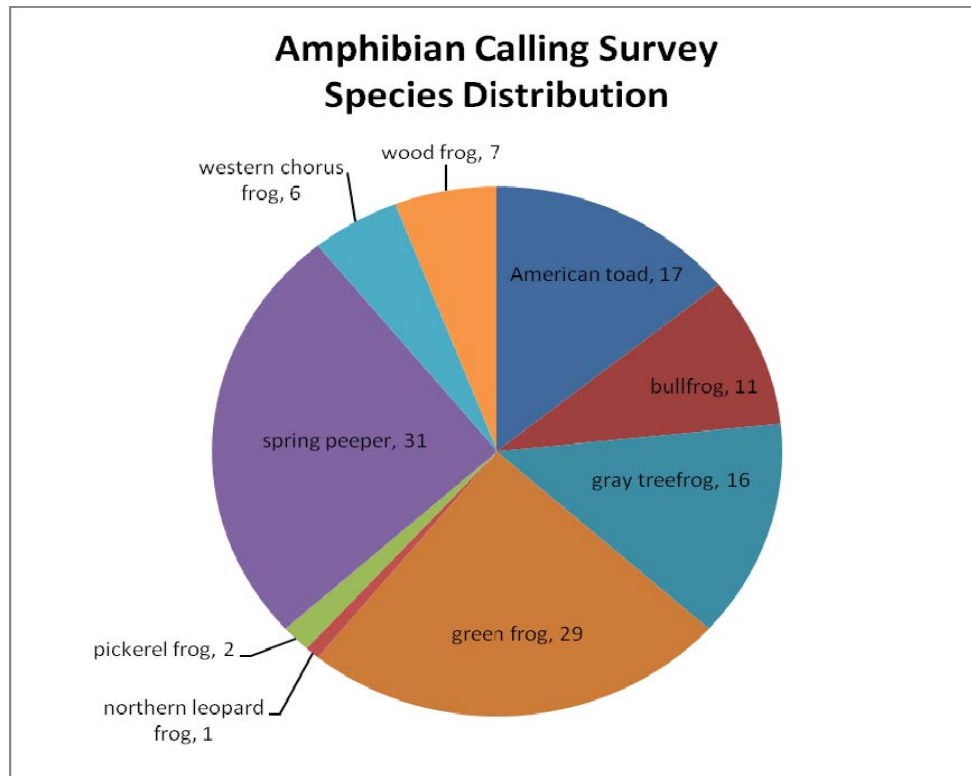


Table 1 documents the occurrence of each species at each survey site during 2008. The number of surveys performed, as well as, the number of months the site was visited is also recorded. This helps explain why a particular species may not be documented for a site from year to year. For example, if the observer did not visit the site in March, they may not have heard wood frogs.

The vernal pool created by volunteers at the Nature Realm had calling activity for the first time since its creation in 2006. Wood frogs and American toads were both detected in 2008. Wood frog egg masses were added to this vernal pool in 2006 and 2007.

Volunteers are asked to survey their assigned site once a month from March through July. They are encouraged to check their site in February as many times wood or chorus frogs call earlier than March. Often times however, volunteers are unable to complete surveys each month. For example, the vernal pool at Sand Run and Liberty Park, Pheasant Run in Silver Creek and Oxbow at Cascade Valley were only surveyed for two months out of five. This accounts for the low species diversity seen at these sites in Table 1.

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, you will 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.

## **Conclusion**

The amphibian calling survey will continue in 2008. No new sites will likely be added to the program unless a need arises through property acquisitions. A handful of volunteers are leaving the program in 2009. We anticipate new volunteers will fill their place.

Table 1. Species Documented at Survey Sites, 2008.

| SITE | PARK             | SITE NAME          | # OBS. | # MONTHS | W. Chorus Frog | Spring Peeper | Wood Frog | Leopard Frog | Pickrel Frog | American Toad | Fowler's Toad | Gray Tree Frog | Crick Frog | Green Frog | Bullfrog |
|------|------------------|--------------------|--------|----------|----------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| 3413 | Bike and Hike    | 303 LOT            | 5      | 5        |                | 1             |           |              |              | 2             |               |                |            | 1          |          |
| 3414 | Bike and Hike    | NORTON RD          | 5      | 4        |                | 2             |           |              |              | 1             |               | 1              |            | 1          | 2        |
| 4332 | Bike and Hike    | YOUNG RD           | 12     | 5        |                | 7             | 1         | 1            |              | 1             |               | 6              |            | 6          | 1        |
| 1448 | Cascade Valley   | SCHUMACHER         | 1      | 1        |                |               |           |              |              | 1             |               |                |            | 1          |          |
| 1463 | Cascade Valley   | OXBOW              | 2      | 2        |                | 1             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1464 | Cascade Valley   | CHUCKERY           | 4      | 4        |                | 2             |           |              |              |               |               | 1              |            | 2          |          |
| 1465 | Cascade Valley   | PARKWAY            | 7      | 4        |                | 3             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1460 | Deep Lock Quarry | LOCK 28            | 4      | 3        |                |               |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 2          | 1        |
| 1461 | Deep Lock Quarry | TOWPATH TRAIL      | 4      | 3        |                |               |           |              |              | 1             |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1462 | Deep Lock Quarry | QUARRY             | 4      | 3        |                | 1             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1472 | Furnace Run      | BRUSHWOOD          | 12     | 4        |                |               |           |              |              | 2             |               |                |            | 5          | 5        |
| 1473 | Furnace Run      | BOG IRON POND 2    | 13     | 5        |                | 4             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1453 | Firestone        | LITTLE TURTLE POND | 18     | 5        |                | 3             |           |              |              | 1             |               | 1              |            | 7          |          |
| 1454 | Firestone        | LONESOME POND      | 18     | 5        | 1              | 3             | 1         |              |              |               |               |                |            | 4          |          |
| 1868 | Firestone        | COVENTRY OAKS      | 18     | 5        | 4              | 6             |           |              |              | 1             |               | 8              |            | 10         |          |
| 1455 | Goodyear Heights | ALDER POND         | 5      | 3        |                | 4             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 3          | 4        |
| 1467 | Goodyear Heights | A-P ROAD           | 12     | 4        |                | 7             | 2         |              |              | 1             |               | 6              |            | 3          |          |
| 1468 | Hampton Hills    | TOP O' THE WORLD   | 12     | 4        |                | 8             |           |              |              | 2             |               | 4              |            | 8          | 7        |
| 2945 | Liberty Park     | VERNAL POOL        | 2      | 2        |                | 1             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 2946 | Liberty Park     | BARR WET LAND      | 2      | 2        |                |               |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 7164 | Liberty Park     | BRINE INJ. SITE    | 11     | 4        |                | 1             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1450 | Munroe Falls     | HERON POND         | 9      | 4        |                | 6             |           |              | 2            |               |               | 1              |            | 5          | 2        |
| 1451 | Munroe Falls     | BEAVER POND        | 9      | 4        |                | 2             |           |              |              | 1             |               |                |            | 3          |          |
| 1452 | Munroe Falls     | MAPLE BEACH        | 9      | 4        |                | 5             |           |              |              | 1             |               | 3              |            | 3          |          |
| 1466 | Munroe Falls     | BIKE AND HIKE      | 9      | 4        |                | 6             |           |              |              |               |               | 3              |            | 4          |          |
| 1870 | Munroe Falls     | INDIAN TRAIL       | 9      | 4        |                | 6             | 2         |              |              |               |               | 1              |            | 3          |          |
| 1456 | Silver Creek     | MEDINA LINE RD     | 7      | 5        | 1              | 3             |           |              |              |               |               | 2              |            | 3          |          |
| 1457 | Silver Creek     | PHEASANT RUN       | 4      | 2        | 2              | 4             |           |              | 1            | 2             |               |                |            | 1          |          |
| 1458 | Silver Creek     | PARKWAY POND       | 7      | 5        | 1              | 3             |           |              |              |               |               | 2              |            | 4          | 1        |
| 1459 | Silver Creek     | PINEY POND         | 4      | 3        |                | 1             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 3          | 2        |
| 1445 | Sand Run         | SENECA POND        | 17     | 5        |                |               |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 2          | 1        |
| 1446 | Sand Run         | ECHO POND          | 14     | 5        |                |               |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 5          | 5        |
| 1447 | Sand Run         | HERB POND          | 13     | 5        |                | 2             |           |              |              | 1             |               |                |            | 5          |          |
| 1469 | Sand Run         | MINGO              | 10     | 4        |                | 5             | 2         |              |              |               |               |                |            |            |          |
| 1470 | Sand Run         | MERRIMAN           | 13     | 5        |                | 8             | 2         |              |              | 1             |               | 6              |            | 4          |          |
| 1471 | Sand Run         | BIG BEND           | 14     | 4        |                | 7             |           |              |              | 2             |               | 6              |            | 7          |          |
| 2944 | Sand Run         | PARKWAY 2A         | 11     | 5        | 2              | 4             |           |              |              |               |               |                |            | 1          |          |
| 5771 | Sand Run         | VERNAL POOL        | 6      | 2        |                |               | 1         |              |              | 1             |               |                |            |            |          |
| 3559 | Virginia Kendall | WETMORE RD         | 7      | 5        |                | 2             |           |              |              |               |               | 2              |            | 3          |          |

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 ½ 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.



Appendix B

## 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 |       |
| Pickerel 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)