

# Frog and Toad Calls on the Trails



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**By Dennis Lindeke, Master Naturalist**

Who's making all that noise from the ponds and marshes along the trails? Birds, crickets, cicadas, turtles? No, it's a bunch of frogs. If you were out in the trails in April and early May this spring, you were treated to the wonderful woodland sounds of the early season frogs. And they are noisy when they get cranked up.

As soon as the ice starts to go out on these ponds, the mating season begins, signaled by their loud and varied calls. The first three frog types to call, males only, are the:

- **Spring Peeper** – He makes a high ping, ping, ping, or peep, peep, peep call
- **Wood Frog** – My favorite. He makes a short raspy quack sound, like a duck.
- **Western Chorus Frog** – They have a unique sound, like a fingernail being dragged across a stiff pocket comb.

These little guys are usually done chatting by mid-May. Following this racket, and sometimes overlapping with them, are the calls of the late spring, early summer group:

- **Leopard Frog** – This is the classic large pond frog, that’s fun to try and catch. The one that’s dark green, with dark spots on his back, like a leopard. His sound is a long, deep snore, ending with a chuckling sound.
- **American Toad** – He is found in the lakes and ponds in the spring, and then moves to yards and gardens in the summer. His unique sound is a long, musical, high pitched trill, lasting 5 – 30 seconds.
- **Tree Frogs** – There are two different, closely related treefrogs in our area; the ‘Gray Treefrog’ and ‘Copes Gray Treefrog’. They look virtually identical, but have slightly different calls. The Gray Treefrog (actually gray or green) has a short musical, birdlike trill. Copes also has a short trill, but it is more like a metallic buzz, and not as musical. They start calling in the ponds for mating season, but then moves to the yards and trees. These are the guys that perch on your windows, near a porch light, hunting for bugs in the summer. When they call from your trees they can be easily confused for a bird. But you will seldom see them, as they are so well camouflaged.
- **Green Frog** – He is another large frog, like the Leopard Frog, and is usually the last guy to call in the summer. He is dark green, with a round patch right behind his eye. His call is sounds like a loose banjo string twang, gunk, or boink.

Right now there are so many of us out enjoying the trails with our family and close friends. Maybe take a moment to listen to the sounds around you and see if you can figure out who it is? If unsure, it’s easy to do a quick internet search on “frog calls”.



**Spring Peeper**



**Wood Frog**



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**Chorus Frog**



**Leopard Frog**



**American Toad**



**Gray Treefrog**



**Green Frog**