

Northern Leopard Frog

COOL FACTS:

Scientific name:	Lithobates pipiens
Average size:	7.6-12.7 cm or 3-5 inch
Average life span:	2 -4 years
Type:	Amphibian
Did you know?	A group of frogs is called an army.



PHYSIOLOGY

The Northern Leopard Frog is named for the spots across its back that resemble that of a leopard. They are generally greenish-brown in colour with a pearly white belly and light coloured dorsolateral ridges on either side of their backs.

The female frog can lay up to 7000 eggs, (but usually only half that) which it attaches to vegetation in the water in the spring (March –June). The eggs hatch within one to three weeks. The tadpoles are light brown with black spots. The tadpole's metamorphosis into frogs in the late summer.

The males make a short snore-like call from the water during spring and summer.

HABITAT/ BEHAVIOUR

Like many frogs the Northern Leopard Frog lives near ponds, swamps, slow-moving streams and marshes. It can also be found in well covered grasslands.

Leopard frogs will eat just about anything that fits in their mouths. They will sit and wait for prey to happen by and then pounce with their powerful legs. They eat crickets, beetle, ants, flies, worm's smaller frogs and even small birds and garter snakes.

They spend winters buried (hibernate) at the bottom of waterbodies that do not freeze solid.

PROTECTION/THREATS

The Northern Leopard Frog is eaten by snakes, turtles, herons and raccoons, to name but a few predators. Unlike toads they do not produce a distasteful skin secretion and rely on speed to evade predation.

The Northern Leopard Frogs were once the largest species of frogs in North America, but they have suffered a large reduction in numbers since the early 1970's. Scientists have not determined the cause of the decline, but it is likely a combination of ecological factors that result in habitat loss (deforestation, pollution and water acidity).

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has the Northern Leopard Frog designated Endangered in British Columbia. It is under Special Concern in the north and the prairies (Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and not at risk in eastern Canada

MORE COOL FACTS:

Tadpoles eat Phytoplankton (microscopic plant like organisms.)

Neither frogs nor toads will give you warts.