

Massachusetts Animals – Spring Peeper

Facts at a Glance

TYPE OF ANIMAL

Amphibian

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Pseudacris crucifer

FOUND WHERE

All across the United States

HEIGHT/LENGTH

Average about 1 in. (2.5 cm)

WEIGHT

Averages from 3 - 5 g

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern



If you've ever heard a loud, high-pitched peeping chime on a spring night - you have likely heard a spring peeper!

These small, round tree frogs are found all across Massachusetts in wooded or forested areas located near water. They are known for their tell-tale high-pitched “peep” that gives them their common name. These frogs are camouflaged well, with smooth skin in shades of tan, brown, green, and grey, often with a distinct cross-like marking on their backs. This cross-marking also gave them their scientific name *crucifer*, meaning “cross-bearer”.

HABITAT

Like many amphibians, spring peepers prefer moist areas near water. They typically live in wooded or forested areas, fields, and grassy lowlands near ponds or wetlands.

Though these frogs are excellent climbers, they often prefer to spend their time on the ground or hiding under the dirt or leaf litter.

DIET

Peepers’ diets vary through their life cycle, but they are generally carnivorous predators. Adults eat small animals such as beetles, ants, flies, and spiders, while tadpoles usually eat algae and microorganisms.

Adults feed in the late afternoon and juveniles in the early morning. If not careful, they can become prey to other amphibians, reptiles, and birds.

LIFE & BEHAVIOUR

Spring peepers are typically an elusive species, though during the spring they are easily identified by the male’s high whistling and peeping mating calls. These sounds may be repeated up to 20+ times a minute!

They live solitary lives but come together to breed in the early spring. Females may lay anywhere from 750 to 1,200 eggs. These eggs will later hatch into small tadpoles, slowly developing into fully grown frogs in about 6 to 12 weeks.

FUN FACT

Spring peepers can survive very cold conditions in the north thanks to a natural “antifreeze” in their blood. This allows them to withstand freezing during hibernation, even during biting winter months.