**Hop into spring!**

Minnesota is home to 14 species of frogs and toads. During the spring, their chorus rings out as males search for females.

Approximately half of all frogs and one-third of all salamander species in North America lay their eggs in ephemeral wetlands, also known as vernal or seasonal ponds. Seasonal wetlands form in low-lying areas and are usually only wet for a few weeks every year. These areas also provide habitat for migrating birds and insects such as dragonflies.

In addition to singing us gentle lullabies on spring and summer evenings, frogs and toads are also part of the web of life. They are food for great blue herons, egrets and even mink. Tadpoles eat large amounts of algae and plankton, helping to keep the water clear, while adult frogs and toads eat a wide variety of creepy crawlies, including insects, slugs and snails. One toad can eat 10,000 bugs and slugs in a single summer.

Despite the abundance of species such as leopard frogs and American toads, other types of frogs are on the decline. The northern cricket frog has nearly vanished from southern Minnesota and s**pring peepers** are disappearing from the Twin Cities metro area. Biologists suspect that loss of forested wetlands is to blame. Frogs are also vulnerable to pollution from fertilizers and pesticides because they have porous skin that can absorb chemicals in water. These chemicals are especially deadly in the spring and early summer when frogs are laying eggs and tadpoles are hatching.

If you live near a lake or wetland, you’re probably already sharing your yard with frogs and toads. You can help to create a healthier habitat by leaving some of the grass unmowed near the edges of woods and water; using little or no chemicals on your lawn and gardens; and planting native plants along the water’s edge. Good plants for lake and wetland edges include sedges, blue flag iris, swamp milkweed, [**joe-pye weed**](https://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Gardening/Archives/2006/Gardening-with-Late-Blooming-Plants.aspx), cardinal flower, black-eyed susans, and ferns.