

Making Ripples

Toadily Awesome Amphibians

by Amanda Bancroft

If the only frog in your life is named Kermit, then you're in for a treat! Real frogs and toads are fun to watch, peaceful to listen to, and a hoot to hold in your hand. It's like holding the heart of nature as it flutters almost imperceptibly, asking to be loved and protected. Frogs and toads have a diversity of calls that can sound like snorting pigs, crying babies, metal balls or pebbles banging together, or someone burping! Some people mistakenly believe the common "ribbit" sound is the only one they make, due to a Hollywood movie soundtrack from the 1920's that used the call of the Pacific Treefrog – not a native species in Arkansas. We have about 30 species of frogs and toads here.

If you'd like to see and hear more frogs, why not [build your own DIY frog pond](#)! Building a pond may even reward you with a tax credit covering all or some of your expenses, according to Tom Krohn, a FrogWatch USA regional coordinator for Arkansas. If you have children or grandchildren, watching tadpoles transform into frogs or toads is educational and inspires a connection with science and nature. There are schools around the country participating in frog pond building, so the project might be something your child's class could do together. Save the Frogs founder Dr. Kerry Kriger spent most of his childhood near a pond. Save the Frogs "is the world's leading nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to amphibian conservation." They help translate science into action by encouraging people to become members, build ponds, and support amphibian conservation efforts.

Before building a frog pond, first learn about the various native species of frogs and toads you hope to attract, what they eat, what kind of habitat they need, and which trees or leaves are poisonous to them. A good place to jump in is by visiting [Arkansas Frogs and Toads](#) or [Herps of Arkansas](#). These websites will help you identify species by sight or sound, and learn more about them. "Herps" include reptiles and amphibians, and there are many beautiful photos of our natives at Herps of Arkansas. Arkansas Frogs and Toads is a fantastic way to memorize frog calls. From the homepage, click "Frog Calls" and then select the picture or name of the species to hear its call. There are four kinds of calls, one for aggression, distress, attracting a mate, and a release call when a male frog has accidentally grabbed an unreceptive potential mate!

Get trained in frog sound identification through [FrogWatch USA](#), and contribute to citizen science. It's easy and there are free workshops on a regular schedule around the state. All it takes to make a contribution after your training is a commitment to monitor a wetland site (like a backyard pond) for three minutes on multiple evenings during the breeding season. So what are you waiting for? Hop to it!

Ripples is an emerging online educational center inspired by a holistic approach to making a difference. Follow our journey to live sustainably and make ripples with our lifestyle at: www.RipplesBlog.org.