Amphibians of Northeast Iowa

Amphibians live both in water and on land, so look for them in moist, dark place, like along bodies of water, under rocks, or in rotting logs.

Spring Peeper

- Look for: very small, grey or brown, and a dark X on back
- Eats: small insect
- Makes a "peep peep" like baby chicks

Northern Leopard Frog

- Look for: green or brown body, two light lines down back, and dark, round spots on back and sides
- Eats: insects and worms
- Makes a deep, low snore or growl like a leopard

Pickerel Frog

- Look for: tan or brown (not green) body, dark, square spots on back
- Eats: insects and worms
- Found in clear trout streams or rivers, not lakes or ponds
- Makes a deep snore or growl

American Toad

- Look for: short legs, stout, brown body, and oval bumps (glands) behind eyes
- Eats: crickets, worms, ants, spiders, and slugs
- Makes a very high trill that can last 30 seconds

Gray Treefrog

- Look for: bright green, brown, or gray body, orange inner legs, and large, sticky toepads
- Eats: insects
- Excellent climber—can even climb glass windows!
- Changes color based on temperature and what its sitting on

Green Frog

- Look for: green or brown body with bright green upper lip and ridges running down back from eyes
- Eats: insects, spiders, fish, snakes, birds, or other frogs
- Mating call sounds like raspy plunks of a banjo, 4 or 5 in a row

Bullfrog

- Look for: light green to dark brown body, no ridges down back from eyes
- Eats: anything it can fit in its mouth!
- The biggest frog in Iowa—can be 8 inches long!
- Mating call is a deep strum, like on a bass fiddle.
- When startled, often makes a great leap and emits a loud "meap!" as it jumps away

Chorus Frog

- Look for: tiny frog, no bigger than an inch, pale green or tan body with 3 wide stripes running down back
- Eats: insects and small invertebrates
- Makes a sound like running fingernails down the teeth of a comb

Tiger Salamander

- Look for: black or grey body with yellow spots
- Eats: earthworms and other small insects or animals
- Common, but very secretive

Cricket Frog

- Look for: brown, gray, or green body with a dark triangle between eyes and a single stripe down the back
- Eats: small insects
- Can jump as far as 3 feet, and is only 1.5 inches long
- Makes a sound like pebbles being hit together quickly.