

Frogs (FinalDraft)

A sticky pink tongue darts out to grab a small, unsuspecting bug and – ZAP! It slurps it down for a mid-morning snack. Such is a moment in the life of the frog, a common amphibian found in all shapes, sizes, and colors and in many places around the world. In fact, about the only place you won't find some kind of frog is in the coldest parts of the world like Antarctica. As a cold-blooded amphibian, the frog cannot adapt to the year-round freezing temperature of the air and water.

From the largest African Goliath frog measuring about one foot long, to the smallest tree frog, which is only about ½ inch, the daily struggle for survival is great. Frogs may make tasty meals of flies and bugs, but other creatures like ducks, fish and bigger insects consider frog eggs, tadpoles, and even a mature frog, to be their dinner of choice. A female frog may lay several thousand eggs, but under the best of conditions, only a few survive to be adult frogs.

Did you know that many common frogs such as the native bullfrog of the Northwest are in danger of becoming extinct? That's because not only do the bullfrog tadpoles face a day-to-day struggle with their natural predators, but as people continue to build houses and buildings and poison the rivers and streams, the natural environment for frogs gets smaller and smaller. The place where frogs live is getting

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dangerously polluted, and each day fewer and fewer frogs can survive.

It may not seem important to make sure that frogs have a safe and clean place to breed and grow, but people need frogs for many more things than you may think. For example, when frogs eat insects, they play a big part in maintaining a sense of balance in nature. WE wouldn't be too excited about living in a world that had no way to keep all the mosquitoes and flies from taking over. would we!

Frogs are also used in medical laboratories to test new drugs before they try them on humans. Kids use frogs to dissect as they are learning about anatomy in school.

Another way that frogs benefit people is that all over the world they are used for food – especially the meaty hind quarters of the larger varieties. My mom has eaten frog legs and says they taste a lot like chicken. (My question is – So why not just eat the chicken then?) However, in some places, frog legs are considered to be a very special meal and can be expensive to order in a restaurant.

Even though there are lots of reasons why frogs are important in our world, it's not hard to imagine a time when people will have built so many houses and roads that creatures such as the frog cannot survive. If that happens, it won't be very long before people can't survive either. The simple act of one sticky pink frog tongue gobbling up a bug represents how much all species, including humans, depend on each other in our natural world.