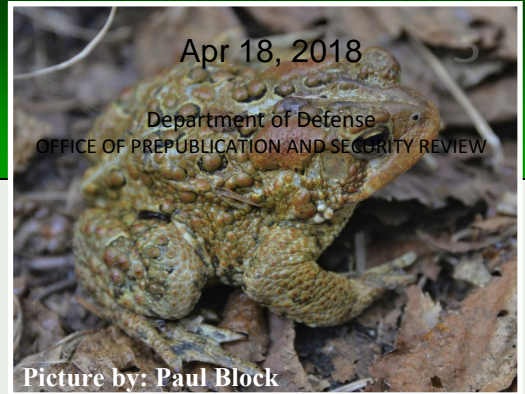
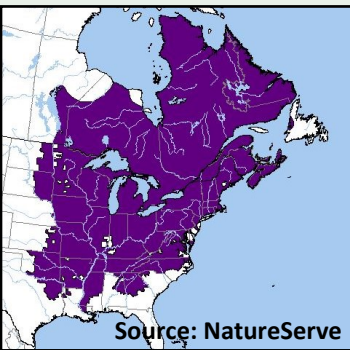


# American Toads and the Department of Defense



The American Toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*) is a common and familiar terrestrial toad widely distributed across eastern North America. It is frequently encountered on military properties on roads and near buildings, especially around lights that attract insects at night. Its musical trill-like call is a harbinger of spring.

**Description:** American Toads are typically 2-3½ in (5.1-9 cm) in body length. The skin is warty. The pupils of the eyes are horizontally elliptical. The color on the dorsal and lateral surfaces is variable, ranging from gray to brown or reddish, and may be uniform or variously spotted and mottled with dark gray blotches. Most dark dorsal blotches encompass only one or two warts. The belly is light. Cranial crests are prominent on adults. Tadpoles are small and uniform black, with a rounded snout.



**Range:** This species is found east of the Rockies in North America from Canada to northern Texas, Louisiana, central Alabama, northern Georgia, and North Carolina. It is absent from most of the Gulf of Mexico and southern Atlantic Coastal Plains. Two subspecies are recognized.

**Habitat:** The American Toad occurs in a wide variety of habitats, ranging from forests to prairies. It hides under objects or burrows underground when inactive. It breeds in temporary pools, generally those which do not have fishes. Eggs are laid and larvae develop in shallow areas.

**Behavior:** This is among the first amphibians to emerge from hibernation. Breeding sites include farm ponds, river floodplain pools, and flooded roadside ditches. Males call within or along the edge of shallow water, emitting a resonant, drawn-out trilled whistle. Eggs are laid in strings on the bottom of temporary pools. Tadpoles are found in aggregations along the margins of these pools. Adults feed almost exclusively on insects and other arthropods.

**Military Interactions:** This is an abundant amphibian on many eastern DoD properties, typically encountered both in military training and housing areas at night when the weather is warm and humid.

**Conservation Status:** The American Toad is not federally- or state-listed as endangered or threatened. This species has a NatureServe conservation ranking of G5-Secure and IUCN Red List category as Least Concern.

**Threats/Planning Considerations:** Threats to this species include destruction and fragmentation of habitats, road mortality, loss of wetlands, introduction of predatory fish to existing wetlands, and chytrid fungus. Military natural resources managers should try to conserve a buffer of upland habitats that surround known wetland breeding sites.

Occurrence on Military Lands	
Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 103 military properties (14 Air Force; 62 Army; 3 Marine Corps; and 24 Navy).	Up to an additional 42 military properties (13 Air Force; 24 Army; and 5 Navy).

