

Fowler's Toad and the Department of Defense



Picture by Rob Lovich

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Fowler's Toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*) is the quintessential "hop-toad" frequently observed on summer nights on roads or on patios or driveways where electric lights attract insects. It is one of the most common frog species present on military properties within its range.

Description: Fowler's Toads are medium-sized terrestrial frogs typically measuring 2-3 inches (5.1-7.5 cm) in snout-vent length, and having dry, warty skin and short legs. The pupil of the eye is horizontally elliptical. In dorsal coloration, these toads are extremely variable, ranging from light gray to brick red, typically with large dorsal dark spots that have three or more warts in each spot. The belly is light. They may be mistaken for American Toads (*A. americanus*) or Southern Toads (*A. terrestris*), which are similar in appearance.

Range: This species' range includes most of the eastern United States and the northern shore of Lake Erie in Canada. It is absent from northern New England and the Florida peninsula.

Habitat: Fowler's Toads occur in a variety of habitats, including wooded areas, floodplains, residential areas, and agricultural areas. They may migrate up to several hundred meters between breeding pools and adjacent terrestrial habitats. Breeding habitat includes shallow water of marshes, rain ponds, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, flooded areas, and other bodies of water lacking a strong current.



Source: IUCN

Behavior: Fowler's toads are nocturnal and are most often seen active on humid summer evenings. They burrow underground or hide under cover when inactive. Breeding takes place from spring to early summer. The call of the male is a sheep-like bleat lasting from 1-4 seconds. Females lay eggs in strings with clutches of up to 25,000 eggs in spring or summer after a heavy rain. Tadpoles go through metamorphosis within 2 months. Adults primarily eat insects and other invertebrates.

Military Interactions: This is one of the most common frog species on DoD properties within its range. This frog is typically encountered both in military training and housing areas.

Conservation Status: Fowler's Toad has no federal conservation status. It is state listed as endangered in Vermont and considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in 13 states at the periphery of its range. It has a NatureServe Raking of G5-Secure, and is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red list.

Threats/Planning Considerations: There are no known major threats. A habitat management practice to benefit this species is to avoid filling wetlands that may be used as breeding sites.

Occurrence on Military Lands	
Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 83 military properties (13 Air Force; 50 Army; 1 Marine Corps; and 19 Navy).	Up to an additional 51 military properties (14 Air Force; 21 Army; 2 Marine Corps; and 14 Navy).

