

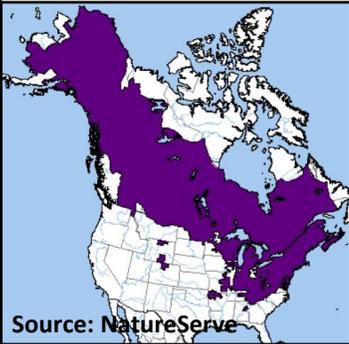
Wood Frogs and the Department of Defense



Picture by: Paul Block

The Wood Frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) is adapted to cold temperatures and its range extends farther north than any other North American amphibian or reptile. The Latin word *sylvaticus* means “amidst the trees” and refers to the Wood Frog’s preference for forested habitat.

Description: A medium-sized frog with adults typically ranging from 1.37 to 2.75 in (3.5 to 7 cm) in total length. The color of this species ranges from nearly pink to shades of brown or black. It has a distinctive dark “mask” through the eyes that extends from the snout to just below the tympanum (outer eardrum). They also have a white stripe outlining their upper lip. The belly is white-colored, and the groin may have a yellow appearance.



Source: NatureServe

Range: Wood Frogs are one of the most widely distributed amphibians in North America. It occurs from northern Alaska to northern Quebec and Newfoundland, and south to the U.S. Upper Midwest and northern Georgia and Alabama. Scattered populations occur in Arkansas, Colorado, and Wyoming.

Habitat: Wood Frogs are typically found in or near moist woodlands, as well as marshy areas, wet meadows, and wooded streams. This species is often encountered in woodlands several hundred meters from wetland breeding sites.

Behavior: Adult Wood Frogs are known as explosive, short-term breeders. Male Wood Frogs may begin calling as early as January, sometimes even before the ice has melted from wetland breeding sites. The call of males is a raspy chuckle similar to a quacking duck. Females lay multiple globular masses of eggs often closely aggregated and attached to submerged plants or other objects. Eggs hatch in 3 weeks and tadpoles complete metamorphosis after 2-4 months. Wood Frogs disperse several hundred meters from breeding areas and live a solitary life when not breeding. Hibernation occurs under rocks, logs, or leaves in wooded areas. Prey of adults consists of a variety of small invertebrates and terrestrial insects. Wood Frogs produce high levels of glycerol, an antifreeze-like substance that prevents ice crystals from forming in their body tissues during hibernation.

Military Interactions: A fairly common frog on most military installations in northern latitudes with appropriate habitat. They may be heard vocalizing during winter at wetland sites near military housing and training areas.

Conservation Status: The Wood Frog is not federally- or state-listed as threatened or endangered. NatureServe lists this species as G5–Secure, and the IUCN ranks the species as Least Concern.

Threats: Fragmentation/deforestation of forest habitat, loss or isolation of vernal pools, disease, and road mortality are all threats to this species.

Occurrence on Military Lands

Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 60 military properties (7 Air Force; 36 Army; 2 Marine Corps; and 15 Navy).	Up to an additional 55 military properties (29 Air Force; 21 Army; and 5 Navy).

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For Open Publication**

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