

2006 Update: Amphibians and Reptiles

Since the publication of this brochure, the presence of the Western Toad has been confirmed in the NWT. As well, one new species of amphibian, the Long-toed Salamander and one new reptile, the Terrestrial Garter Snake, are now expected to occur in the southern NWT. *Look for them yourself by turning over small rotting logs!* Another update is that in 2005 the Northern Leopard Frog and the Western Toad were listed as *Special Concern* by the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Management plans are expected for these two species by June 2008.

Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*)

The Western Toad is found in the Dehcho region. It is ranked as *May Be at Risk* in the NWT general status ranks and *Special Concern* under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Populations in the NWT are at the extreme northern limits of the species range in North America. Detailed investigations on NWT populations of Western Toads would be needed to determine if they are at risk. However, Western Toads are nocturnal and are difficult to locate outside of the spring breeding season when they congregate at ponds and begin calling (a quiet peeping like little chicks - [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)).

Identification: One of the larger toads, the Western Toad ranges from 5-12cm in length. It is usually green or brown with a light stripe going down the middle of its back. The major difference between the Western Toad and some of the other true toads is that this toad has no cranial crest between the eyes and tends to walk rather than hop. Its warts are reddish brown, surrounded by black.



Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*)

The Long-toed Salamander may be found along the shores of rivers in the southern Dehcho region, just north of the NWT border. Like most salamanders, the Long-toed Salamander is quite shy. If spotted, you can easily identify this salamander by its brown to black body and vivid yellow stripe down its back. This slender salamander can reach a total length of 140 mm.



Terrestrial Garter Snake (*Thamnophis elegans*)

The Terrestrial Garter Snake may be found in forest-grassland areas of the South Slave region. Harmless to humans, this terrestrial snake, also named the Western Wandering Garter, is primarily active in the day. It is a slender snake of grey, or brown to greenish colouring with light stripes (orange/yellow) on its back. It is distinguished from the Red-sided garter by having eight scales on its upper lip and lack of red bars between the back and side stripes. Although not as aquatic as some garter snakes, it will most likely be found near a body of water.



Useful references for more information:

<http://www.carcnet.ca/> (listen to calls here!)
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>
http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/pdf/YukonAmphibians_final05.pdf

To report observations of Amphibians or Reptiles in the NWT – call Frog Watch (867) 920-6327



Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources

