

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Look for it now in Southwest Ohio!

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"Spring Peeper" by OCVN Dave Woehr, used with permission



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## Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

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Spring peepers are tiny frogs, measuring only  $\frac{3}{4}$  -  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. What they lack in size they make up for with their loud calls. Their common name comes from the sound they make which sounds like they are saying "PEEP!" When the peepers start calling, springtime is not far off. Most of the year spring peepers live quietly in the trees.

During their early spring breeding season, they make their annual migration to temporary pools of water called ephemeral ponds. Once at the pond the males strike up a chorus hoping to woo nearby females. The best way to find spring peepers is to listen for them. When you hear them call, get some friends together to venture out after dark. Make sure to carry a flashlight and wear waterproof boots. You can hear them calling from quite a distance but finding one can be difficult, remember they are smaller than a quarter and located in standing water. They will stop calling when you get close so move silently or stand still until they start calling again.

Once you find the ephemeral pond you may also find wood frogs, spotted salamanders or other Ambystoma salamanders, sometimes called mole salamanders. These temporary bodies of water are valuable natural resources that help support a rich diversity of organisms. Once you hear the call of the spring peeper up close, you may just want to make an annual tradition of it.

To learn more about this species, visit [page 34 of Ohio Division of Wildlife's "Amphibians of Ohio" Field Guide](#).

### FUN FACTS

- The spring peeper has a dark cross on its back in the shape of an "X", hence the scientific name "crucifer."
- They are actually a treefrog and can jump very well.
- In freezing weather, they are less active, sometimes appearing to be motionless.
- Ephemeral ponds (also known as vernal pools) lack fish. This is important because fish would devour the eggs of the spring peeper and other amphibians.
- Listen to spring peepers calling [here!](#)