

About Amphibians

Amphibians are small vertebrates that need water, or a moist environment, to survive.

The species in this group include salamanders, newts, frogs, and toads.

All can breathe and absorb water through their very thin skin.

Amphibians also have special skin glands that produce useful proteins. Some transport water, oxygen, and carbon dioxide either into or out of the animal. Others fight bacteria or fungal infections. And at least one is used for defence.

Today, we'll talk about the anurans group in Belgium.

This group represents the frogs and toads :

Frogs :

Les grenouilles «brunes»

There are 3 species in this group in Wallonia:

- ☐ red frog (*Rana temporaria*)
- ☐ agile frog (*Rana dalmatina*)
- ☐ field frog (*Rana arvalis*)



Les grenouilles «vertes

There are 3 species in this group in Wallonia:

- the green frog (*Pelophylax kl. esculentus*)
- Lessona frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*)
- laughing frog (*Pelophylax ridibundus*)

La Rainette verte (*Hyla arborea*)

Crapaud (toads) :

(*Alytes obstetricans*)

yellow-bellied ringer (*Bombina variegata*)

brown peholate (*Pelobates Fuscus*)

common toad (*Bufo bufo*)

natterjack taod (*Bufo calamita*)

the life cycle of frogs

See how this amazing animal grows from tadpole to frog...

Frogs and toads undergo an astonishing **transformation** – which is called ‘*metamorphosis*’ – as they grow up.

But how does this **metamorphosis** work?

This happens in **early spring**, when the weather is just starting to get **warmer**.

They then begin massive migrations towards the egg-laying site, in wet weather and when temperatures reach at least five degrees Celsius, to reach their breeding grounds, as these frogs are often faithful to their site of origin.

At this time of the year, you can see the female frog carrying the male frog to the pond or puddles.

Once at the pond, the mating takes place in the water; the male will stay on the female until she lays her eggs. Then, the male releases the sperm that will fertilise the eggs.

The baby frogs start out as **tiny black dots** surrounded by a **jelly-like substance**.

After spending 1 to 3 weeks eating the **yolk** of their egg an aquatic larva will emerge from the egg And the baby frog hatches into the big, wide world.

Now, the baby frogs are known as **tadpoles**. They have **gills**, a **mouth**, and a **long tail**, which they need for **swimming**!

Unlike adult frogs, tadpoles **can't go on land** – so they feed on **plant material** filtered from the water, and tiny chunks of nearby **vegetation**.

The tadpoles slowly **metamorphose** into frogs over the next **14 weeks**.

First, they grow **back legs**, then **front legs** too! Soon after, their body starts to change **shape**, and they're able to start eating **insects**.

Next, the tadpoles' **tails shrink away**, and skin **grows over their gills**, as they develop **lungs** ! These are super important steps, as they prepare the tadpole for **life on land**.

Once this stage is finished, the baby frogs emerge from the water as **tiny adults**!

Fully-grown frog!

And there you have it – the frogs are all **grown up**, and ready to head out into the big wide world!

The adult frog will leave the pond and start living in the forests or fields except at the time of mating between March and June when it will return to the pond.

Before too long, the females will look for water to lay her own eggs. Once that's happened, the life cycle is complete.

DID YOU KNOW?

- As far as scientists are concerned, there's no difference between frogs and toads! They have different characteristics, but share the same family tree.
- It's thought that frogs have been around for over 200 million years. That would mean they were leaping around at the same time as the dinosaurs!
- Frogs don't need to drink water because they absorb it through their skin.
- The lifespan of frogs can vary massively from just 2 years up to 10 years. However, some frogs have been known to live for longer than 20 years!

