

### **I Found a Frog...What Do I Do With It?**

Finding a frog or toad in your backyard is a great discovery, especially if you live in an urban setting where these creatures are rarely found. Unless you have a large pond, most frogs and toads we find are transients taking up temporary residence where food and habitat seem good. But when autumn rolls around, starts to cool off, and the frog has not left, what do you do with your little friend? Here is some advice:

### **Does this mean I have a new pet frog or toad?**

No! Please do not take in the animal. Not only is this illegal, but this is a wild animal that will not do well in a captive environment. Also, the proper artificial habitat is expensive, combined with the cost of food for the winter. And if you get attached to the animal (which is difficult *not* to do), it will be more difficult to release it in the spring. Many of the animal's special survival skills will be lost in captivity over the winter. Frogs and toads hibernate in the winter, and rest their bodies for the following summer season. Frogs will want to slow down as daytime temperatures and lengths decrease, but it is not cool enough in our homes to lower metabolic rates. As a result, the frog remains active, will not eat, and will slowly starve. Some frogs with specialized care and live food will change their natural cycles and begin to feed, but if yours does not, it will die unnecessarily.

### **Should I move it to my cottage? There are great ponds there!**

No! Moving them far away will cause them undue stress when they have to find new hibernation, breeding, and foraging grounds, all while trying to find adequate hiding places from predators, and trying to find their way back home. Also, even though you may find frogs of the same species at your cottage, there is possibly a genetic difference between the two populations, which can also be detrimental to the sustainability of the population.

### **So, what should I do then?**

Move the frog or toad to the nearest pond or wetland that is at least a metre. Do not put frogs or toads in rivers. Though you may see frogs in rivers in the summer, they generally only use the rivers as pathways to other water bodies, and the heavy Spring Flush that occurs every year can be detrimental to them.

Most of the time, frogs or toads that have settled into your backyard ponds are the young-of-the-year who are looking for suitable habitat. They can travel over 1 km looking for somewhere to stay, and they don't always find prime froggy habitat, so you can always return them to their birth ponds.

### **More information**

If the above advice does not work for you, or is not applicable to you, please contact the Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator at 416-392-5999, or at [aap@torontozoo.ca](mailto:aap@torontozoo.ca).

Also, check out the Urban Outback—Wetlands for Wildlife: A Guide to Wetland Restoration and Frog-Friendly Backyards! Find it here:

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/UrbanOutback.asp>, or contact Adopt-A-Pond to receive a hard copy!