

He also told me that some humans worry about the toads and go out in the night, in the freezing rain, with lights and buckets and signs and try to carry the toads safely across the roads so they don't get squished. Yuk! I think squished frogs must be really gross.

I think if Denfred likes those toads, he must really LUV a cute eco-cat like me

Activity suggestions:

Stand quietly outside in the evening in August when it's rainy and listen for the call of the Western Leopard Toad. It sounds like an old man snoring. Then tell your teacher when and where you heard it calling.



A Whale Coast Conservation Youth Environment Programme Project



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THE LEOPARD TOAD



BY STRIPES
THE ECO-CAT

It was raining and there was water everywhere. There were also frogs click-clicking all day.

My Denfred human saw me looking out of the window. "Frogs live in places where there are puddles of water, called wetlands", he said.

"When it's their breeding season the boys call the girls to come along for a little romance."

My Denfred human then told me frogs are the most threatened type of animal on the planet. This means there are not many of them left because people have been draining the water in their wetlands to build houses or to plant things.

"We should feel very happy if we hear the frogs calling. They have very sensitive skins, so if they are here we know we are not messing up their habitat here at the Green House", he said.

"What use are frogs?" I asked, hoping he would say none at all.

"They are very important in eco-systems", Denfred replied. "They are part of the way everything in nature connects together. One thing provides the

food for another thing, which in turn is the food for another bigger thing. Frog babies, called tadpoles, eat tiny plants in the water. The bigger frogs eat insects and they, in turn, are eaten by birds like herons. It's called the food chain."

I wondered if my pellets are part of a food chain.

"Did you know there are endangered Western Leopard Toads living in Stanford?" Denfred asked.

"So what's a toad if it's not a frog", I asked a bit confused.

"They are all frogs, but we call the round warty ones that hop 'toads' and the thin ones with long jumping legs we call 'frogs'". Denfred seems to be a froggie sort.

He then told me that there are very few of these Leopard Toads left because of the bad things humans have done to their habitat. The toads now live right in between human houses and have to cross very dangerous human roads to get to their ponds where they go to breed - that means making baby frogs, in case you didn't know.