ELF NOTES

Environmental Learning for the Future – Vermont Institute of Natural Science
www.vinsweb.org/education/elf/volunteers.html

EGG DIARIES

Spring is the time for amphibians to make their annual treks to ponds and other watery places to mate and lay eggs. Make a trip to a pond and see if you can find any eggs. Frogs' eggs are bunched together in a clump; toads' eggs are generally arranged in long strings. You might find salamander eggs, which are larger than frogs eggs but found in smaller bunches. The eggs are alive and need to breathe and will need to have food soon after they hatch. Start an amphibian's diary, to track the development of the eggs. Draw and date a picture of the eggs that you find, write notes and add a small map so that you can go back to check on them. Make a trip back to the same place once a week to record changes in the eggs as they develop into frogs, toads or salamanders. How long does it take for them to develop from egg to hopping or swimming adult?

ADAPTATIONS

FROGS AND POLLIWOGS

Frogs and toads are amphibians, animals that live part of their lives in water and part on land (*amphi bios* – double life). In each life stage they are adapted to survive in particular surroundings.

Though similar in many ways, there are notable physical differences between toads and frogs. Most frogs have smooth, moist skin. Toads generally have relatively dry, rough skin and can live in drier environments than frogs.

Each species of frog and toad has a different courtship call sung by the male to attract females of his species.

Most frogs and toads mate in water in spring or early summer, and females lay eggs in water. Eggs develop into legless tadpoles or "polliwogs" with a tail and gills. Over time tadpoles metamorphose into tailless adults with lungs and legs.

Frogs, like most predators, eat live prey. Special adaptations like a sticky tongue and wide mouth make it possible to catch moving insects.

ELF NEWS FROM SCHOOL