

Animal Classifications

Amphibians



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Some words are shown in bold, **like this**. You can find out what they mean by looking in the glossary.

Meet the Amphibians

Scientists divide living things into groups. This is called **classification**. The animals in each group have certain things in common. One group is called the amphibians. Most amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part on land.

A frog is at home in water as well as on land.





A salamander is a type of amphibian.

Amphibians are part of a larger group called **vertebrates**. All vertebrates have a **backbone** and a hard **skeleton** inside their bodies. Birds, reptiles, and mammals are also vertebrates.

Body Shape

Amphibians are divided into three groups. You can tell which group an amphibian belongs to by the shape of its body. Adult frogs and toads have four legs and no tail. Salamanders and newts have four legs and a tail.

Some male newts have a crest along their back and a colorful belly.





Caecilians live in hot, wet places in the tropics.

Caecilians have no legs and look a bit like worms. Most caecilians also **burrow** through the soil. Unlike worms, caecilians have bones and teeth.

On the Move

Different amphibians move in different ways. Frogs and toads have **webbed feet**, which help them to swim fast through water. Most use their long back legs to hop over the ground.

When a frog is in danger, it quickly leaps to safety.





A salamander's legs are so short that its belly drags on the ground.

Salamanders and newts have short legs and squirm from side to side as they walk. Some amphibians spend most of their time in the water. They swim or crawl along the bottom of streams.

Warming Up

Amphibians are **cold-blooded**. This means that they cannot make their own body heat, as birds and mammals do. Instead, they take in warmth from the sun and their surroundings.

A frog warms up in the daytime and cools off at night.

