

Warm nights to bring out road crossings of Massachusetts frogs, toads, salamanders

“ATTENTION DRIVERS: Warm, rainy nights above 40°F will bring amphibians out of their winter retreats.

As frogs, toads, and salamanders migrate to their breeding sites, they often cross roads. You can help amphibians by using caution while driving, and avoiding travel on small roads near wetlands and vernal pools on rainy nights this spring.

For many Massachusetts residents, spring rain is a reminder of the changing seasons. For smaller Massachusetts natives, like amphibians, spring rains signal it's time to emerge from winter retreats and migrate to breeding sites. Unfortunately, many of those animals will face the daunting task of having to cross roads to reach their destinations.



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife photo.
Spotted salamanders, wood frogs, blue-spotted salamanders,

Jefferson salamanders, American toads, spring peepers, four-toed salamanders, northern leopard frogs, and eastern red-backed salamanders are frequently encountered on roads during early spring rains. Weather is always difficult to predict in New England, but so far it appears that migrations may start as soon as early March for some pool-breeding amphibians.

These animals can be difficult to see, as they are generally small-bodied and move under the cover of dark. This spring, please be mindful of our amphibians and our natural heritage.”
-Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.

How you can help:

- Please drive cautiously and carefully.
- Whenever possible over the next 2 months, please consider not driving on rainy nights when air temperatures are 40°F or higher. If you must travel during such conditions, delaying beyond the first 2 hours after sunset is recommended.
- Travel on larger highways rather than small, wooded roads if possible. Plan routes that minimize the number of wetlands or vernal pools passed.
- If observing amphibian migrations, consider arriving at your destination prior to sunset, and then conduct your monitoring on foot.
- If assisting amphibians across roadways or handling them for other reasons, be sure your hands are free of lotions, bug repellent, or other chemicals.
- Report high levels of amphibian activity or mortality to the Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife initiative, which compiles data to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions on problem roadways.
- If you encounter any of our state-listed rare amphibian species (eastern spadefoot, blue-spotted salamander, Jefferson salamander, and marbled salamander), please take a clear photograph of the animal, carefully record the location, and submit an observation report to MassWildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

- Go the extra mile to help preserve amphibian habitat by certifying vernal pools on your property. The data you collect is used to help MassWildlife and local conservation organizations better understand habitat resources for our native amphibians.