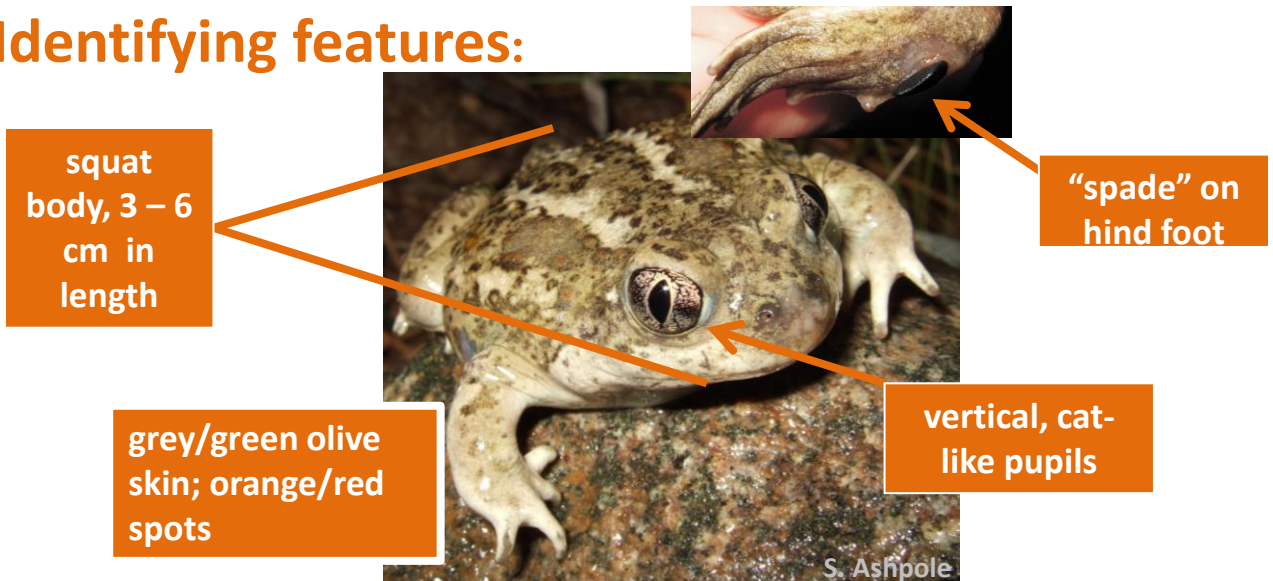


The Great Basin Spadefoot

Spea intermontana

Identifying features:



Spadefoots, known in Okanagan as “p'əskʷaqs”, are a true desert species.

Great Basin Spadefoots:

- breed in shallow, fish-free temporary wetlands less than 30 cm (1 foot) deep;
- are the fastest transforming amphibian in the Okanagan, transforming from egg to adult form in less than 6 weeks;
- as adults are dependent on desert grasslands with soft sandy soil for burrowing;
- burrow underground using their hind foot spade, and spend up to 8 months underground during the winter;
- can lose up to half of their weight in water during dry periods;
- cover themselves in a blanket of mucous while underground to prevent drying out;
- Males make a loud snoring sound in spring to attract females;
- are provincially “**blue-listed**”, of special concern, largely due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, road mortality, pollution such as pesticides, and introduced invasive species.

Why are Spadefoots important?

- Spadefoots contribute to nutrient links between land and water;
- Spadefoots are important prey for many animals and predators of many species, such as insects including mosquitoes;
- Spadefoots contribute to the health of Okanagan wetland ecosystems. Wetlands:
 - are one of the Earth’s most productive ecosystems;
 - are the earth’s “kidneys”, filtering our drinking water and recharging groundwater;
 - buffer against floods and drought;
 - provide shade, refuge, food, and medicine for animals and humans;
 - provide habitat for over 600 species of wildlife, including more than one-third of Canada’s species at risk.



How can we help?

Small steps go a **long way** towards helping Spadefoots and conserving wetlands:

- retain native plants and loose, sandy soils in your yard;
- avoid pesticide use on land and around water;
- retain non-toxic cover objects, such as logs or non-treated wooden garden ornaments in your yard;
- retain vegetation buffers around ponds;
- outfit your pool with a “**froglog**”;
- provide an alternate water source and limit livestock access to wetlands;
- report Spadefoot sightings to Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society or BC Frogwatch (bcfrogwatch@victoria1.gov.bc.ca);
- Get outside and enjoy your local wetlands!
- Become a **Wildlife Habitat Steward** with Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society!



For more information, please contact:
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