

Red-spotted Toad

Bufo punctatus
Family Bufonidae



Global Rank: G5

State Rank: S3 (UT); S4 (CO);
S5 (AZ, CA, NV, NM)

Distribution: It ranges from southern Nevada to southwestern Kansas to Hidalgo and the tip of Baja California in Mexico, and from central Texas to southeastern California. Extends from below sea level at Death Valley, California, to around 6,500 ft. (1,980 m.) in elevation.

Description: Adults reach to 3 in. (7.5 cm.) in snout-vent length. This small toad has a flattened head and body and round paratoids, each about the same size as the eye. The snout is pointed, and cranial crests are weak or absent. Coloration is light gray, olive, or reddish brown above, with reddish or orange warts. It is whitish to buff below, with or without spotting. Young have numerous red- or orange-tipped warts, and are dark spotted below. Underside of feet are yellow. Adult males have dusky throats.

Reproduction: Breeds from March to September during or after rains in springs, rain



Current range of the red spotted toad

pools, reservoirs, and temporary pools in intermittent streams. May be diurnal during breeding season. Males generally call from exposed boulders or rocks at the water's edge. Small choruses of fewer than ten males are more common. The eggs of this toad are the most distinctive of all North American toads. Eggs are laid singly instead of in strings. Each egg is protected by a layer of sticky gelatin that adheres together to form egg masses a single layer thick. Hatching and metamorphosis of tadpoles usually occurs quickly during the late spring and summer.

Food: Diet includes beetles, bees, bugs, ants, and various other arthropods. One study found that adults generally had empty stomachs in May and June, but whether this was related to the breeding season, the emergence of prey species related to the normal July rainy season, or other reasons is unknown.

Habits: The toad is most often encountered in dry rocky areas at lower elevations, where it typically occurs near desert springs, persistent pools, along rocky arroyos, or around cattle tanks. At higher elevations, it utilizes open grassland, scrubland, oak woodland, and rocky canyons. The toad's small size and relatively flat shape probably helps it retreat under rocks or into rock crevices during dry weather. It is largely nocturnal except during the breeding season, but occasionally may be found abroad during mornings and early evenings. It is active and alert and is often found under large flat rocks where it seeks shelter during the day. It is often found on roadways at night during summer rains. It climbs trees with ease.

Management Implications: No known management problems. Little is known about its life history. It may interbreed with the western toad and Woodhouse's toad in parts of its range.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Degenhardt, W.G., C.W. Painter, and A.H. Price. 1996. Amphibians and reptiles of New Mexico. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM.