

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

ARROYO TOAD

Anaxyrus californicus

Family: BUFONIDAE
A035

Order: ANURA

Class: AMPHIBIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The arroyo toad is found in the southern part of the Coast Ranges from northern San Luis Obispo Co. south to Baja California. Once considered a subspecies of the Arizona toad, *A. microscaphus*, *A. californicus* has now been elevated to full species status. Its elevational range extends up to 1950 m (6400 ft) (M. R. Jennings pers. comm.). This species is found in semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams. Habitats used include valley-foothill and desert riparian as well as a variety of more arid habitats including desert wash, palm oasis, and Joshua tree, mixed chaparral and sagebrush. Adults active from March to July (Stebbins 1954, 1985, Behler and King 1979).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Adults of this species feed on snails, Jerusalem crickets, beetles, ants, caterpillars, moths, and occasionally they cannibalize newly metamorphosed individuals. Southwestern toads usually feed during the night, but may occasionally feed during the day. Individuals walk instead of hop when foraging for food (Mayhew 1968, Behler and King 1979).

Cover: No information.

Reproduction: Eggs are laid on the bottom of quiet parts of clear streams or shallow ponds. Eggs are laid among leaves, gravel, or sticks (Stebbins 1954, 1985).

Water: Clear, standing water is required for egg deposition .

Pattern: Often found near rivers with sandy banks, willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores in valley-foothill and desert riparian habitats. Found in loose gravelly areas of streams in drier portions of its range.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Adult toads are primarily nocturnal, but may be diurnal during breeding season. Newly metamorphosed toads are active during the daylight hours and can tolerate much higher temperatures than can adults (Mayhew 1968). Adults of this species are active at ambient temperatures between 22-35° C (72-95° F) (Brattstrom 1963).

Seasonal Movements/Migration: No specific information. Probably migrates short distances to breeding sites.

Home Range: No information.

Territory: No information.

Reproduction: Breeding season is primarily from March to July, sometimes to September. Eggs are laid in tangled strings in the thousands (Stebbins 1954).

Niche: No information.

Comments: This species is referred to by some as *Bufo californicus*. Other common names used are arroyo toad, and southern California toad.

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