

Pick a Trail

Frog Monitoring

One important, long term indicator of the health of Lake Linganore's ecosystem is the vitality of the frog population around the lake. Frogs are constantly absorbing water through their skin and are particularly sensitive to pollution and environmental changes that can cause poor water quality, so a declining population could mean the lake is in trouble.

To track the frog population (as well as other reptiles and amphibians), the Natural History Society of Maryland and Maryland Department of Natural Resources established the Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA). MARA is an ongoing project to identify and locate frogs (and other reptiles and amphibians) by their calls, record the sightings, and store the information in an online database. You can help track the health of Lake Linganore as well as help the county and state by reporting your sightings to MARA.

Be a MARA Observer!

PART I: Education

Get to know the frog calls a bit.

The calls of the most common frog species found in Maryland and around the lake can be heard by visiting the MD Department of Natural Resources website at:

www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Plants_Wildlife/herps/index.asp

Once on the site, follow these steps to find the frog calls:

- Click on the silhouette of the frog. You will be taken to the Field Guide for Maryland's Frogs and Toads.
- Scroll to the bottom of the webpage and you will see the picture or species name for profiles of each of the 20 species of Maryland's Tree frogs
- Click on a picture of the frog you are interested in and read down the page to learn about the size, appearance, habitat, and how to find the frog. The "How To Find" section will have a link to click on that will allow you to listen to that frog's distinctive call.

TIP: Set up a bookmark on your smartphone to access this web page so you can hear the calls for reference as you go on your frog hunt.

Part II: Start out an evening at dusk

Search around your house or take an evening hike. Get a flashlight and you can go 'spotlighting' for frogs at night. Can you hear the frogs calling? Are they visiting the pond or pool in your backyard?

Part III: Submit any frog and toad sightings!

If you see a toad crossing the road, snap a photo and write down the location.

Going on a hike through a park? Take along a MARA datasheet and record the species you see along the way. Keep a MARA datasheet handy in your house and whenever you have a tree frog visit your window, take a photo and mark it down.

Visit <http://marylandnaturalist.org/mara-resources/> to download a datasheet.