

## Toads at Ivy Creek- A Little Naturalist Activity

*created for use by the Ivy Creek Foundation*

When you explore Ivy Creek Natural Area, it is fun to look for toads along the wooded trails. Toads often hide in the daytime and come out at night to look for insects to eat.

American toads can be red or brown or even gray. They look like they have warts on their back but toads do not give you

warts if you handle them. Toads are 2 to 4 inches in size when grown. American toads make a sound like a trill.



Photograph by Bob Gore



Photograph by Bob Gore

Toads, like frogs, are amphibians and have an amazing life cycle. Adults lay eggs in shallow pools that change into tadpoles. A tadpole looks like a tiny fish with a big mouth. In about 60 days, the tadpoles grow legs and lose their tail and become toadlets.

Next time you visit Ivy Creek, bring a magnifying glass with you and have an adult help you look for small animals such as toads, insects, and lizards. If you don't have a magnifying glass, bring a toilet paper cardboard tube and look through it to find small things. Be careful turning over logs and rocks as snakes and spiders also like to live in these places.



Photograph by Bob Gore

And put any rocks and logs that you move back where you found them so the animals will have their homes.

Keep reading to find a story of a boy who enjoyed discovering toads and other small animals with a magnifying glass. Download the story to use as a coloring book.

## A Toad's World

By Carolyn Long with illustrations by Sue Gosnell

"Ben, you should go outdoors. There is so much to see."

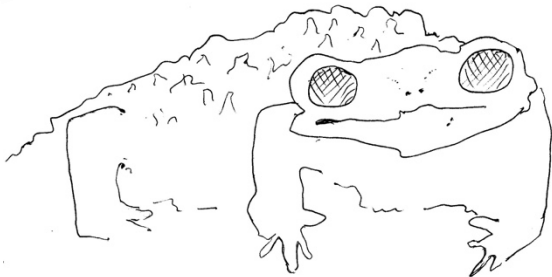
Ben is not so sure. All he sees are trees.

Then his father gives him a piece of rope and a magnifying glass.

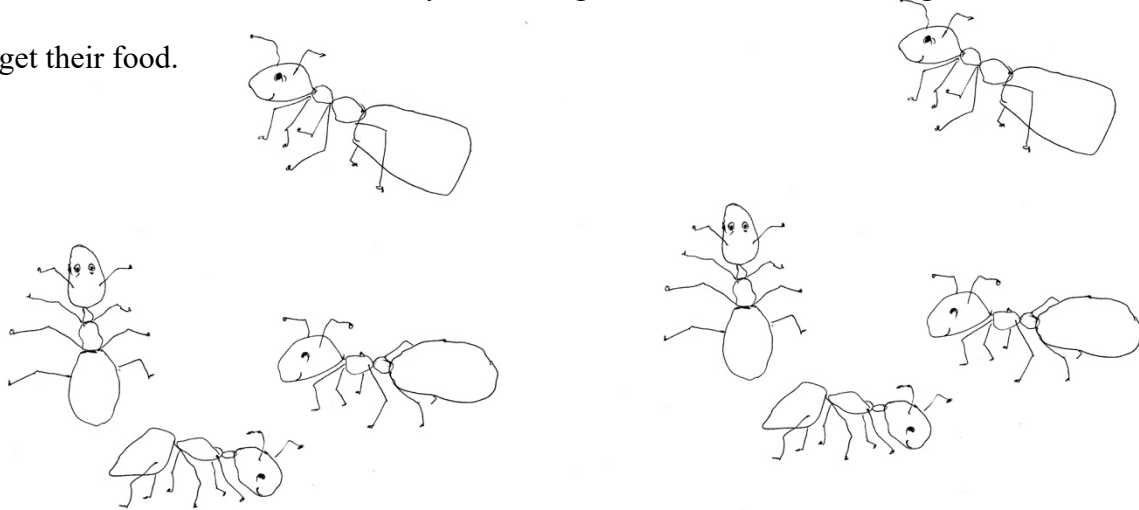
"We'll take the rope and make a circle on the ground.

Then we'll see what you can find inside the circle using the magnifying glass."

Ben and his father go outside to the woods. He makes a rope circle about the size of a bicycle wheel. Inside the circle is a white mushroom on a bed of green moss. Soon a red toad hops into the circle.



Ben is excited. He looks carefully at the toad through the magnifying glass and sees warts on his back. Then Ben finds a line of tiny ants taking crumbs into a hole. A larger black ant is trying to get their food.



While Ben is watching, the toad shoots out his tongue and eats the big ant.

Wow, that was great, Ben thinks.

Ben spies a rock and carefully picks it up. Underneath is a huge black beetle with pincers.

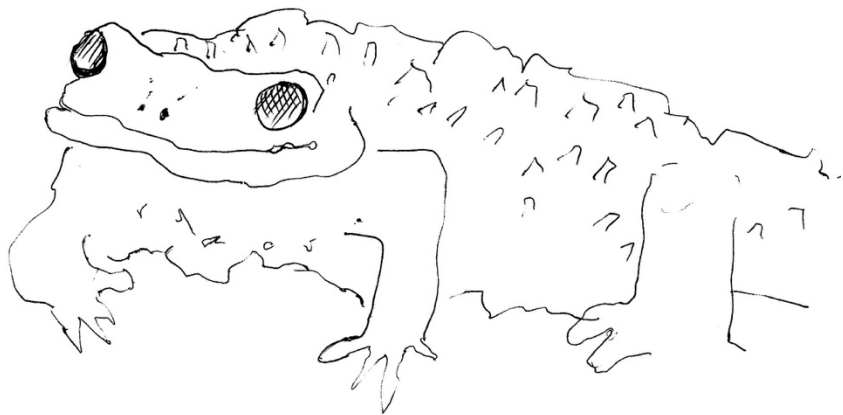
When he sees the pincers through the magnifying glass, Ben decides to leave the beetle alone. At that moment, a lizard flashes through the circle.

“Awesome camouflage,” Ben says.

Ben decides it is time to go and picks up the rope and magnifying glass.

When they get inside, his father asks him what he thinks.

“I found a toad's world,” Ben says.



## Activities:

Make a paper bag toad puppet. Use a plain brown paper sandwich bag and crayons. Draw toad eyes on the folded part of the bag. Draw a big, red tongue under the folded part of the bag. Add four legs to the bag. Place your hand in the bag and have the toad open and close his mouth by moving the folded part.



Make a paper plate toad. Use a white paper plate. Fold it in half. Draw toad eyes on the top. Draw a big red tongue on the inside. Open and close the plate to help the toad eat.

### Read:

*Frogs* by Gail Gibbons.

*Gem* by Holly Hobbie

*300 Frogs: A Visual Reference to Frogs and Toads from Around the World* by Chris Mattison

These books are available at the local library: [jmrl.org](http://jmrl.org).