



WORKING IN WESTERN TOAD HABITAT

Best Practices

Western toads are a species at risk in the Northwest Territories. They are vulnerable to human activities—especially during breeding and migration seasons. Construction, driving, and even walking through toad habitat can disturb or harm toads, eggs, and tadpoles. You can help reduce impacts while working in or near their habitat.

What is the Western Toad?

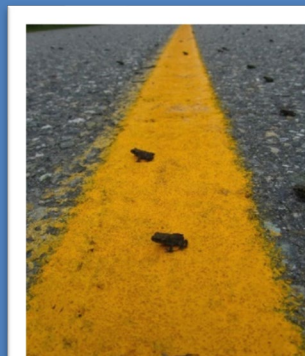
- A species at risk found in the Liard Valley of the Northwest Territories.
- Green to brown with a light stripe down the middle of its back.
- Can be olive green, reddish brown, or black.
- Has small round 'warts' on its back, sides, and upper limbs.
- Juveniles (toadlets) look like smaller versions of adults but may be darker.
- Tadpoles are black with a long tail.
- Eggs are laid in long jelly-like strings.

Sizes vary:

- Adults: 5-12 cm (about the length of a finger)
- Toadlets: Can be smaller than a dime
- Tadpoles: 1-3 cm long



Western Toad, Yannick Letailleur



Toadlets, Fraser Valley Conservancy



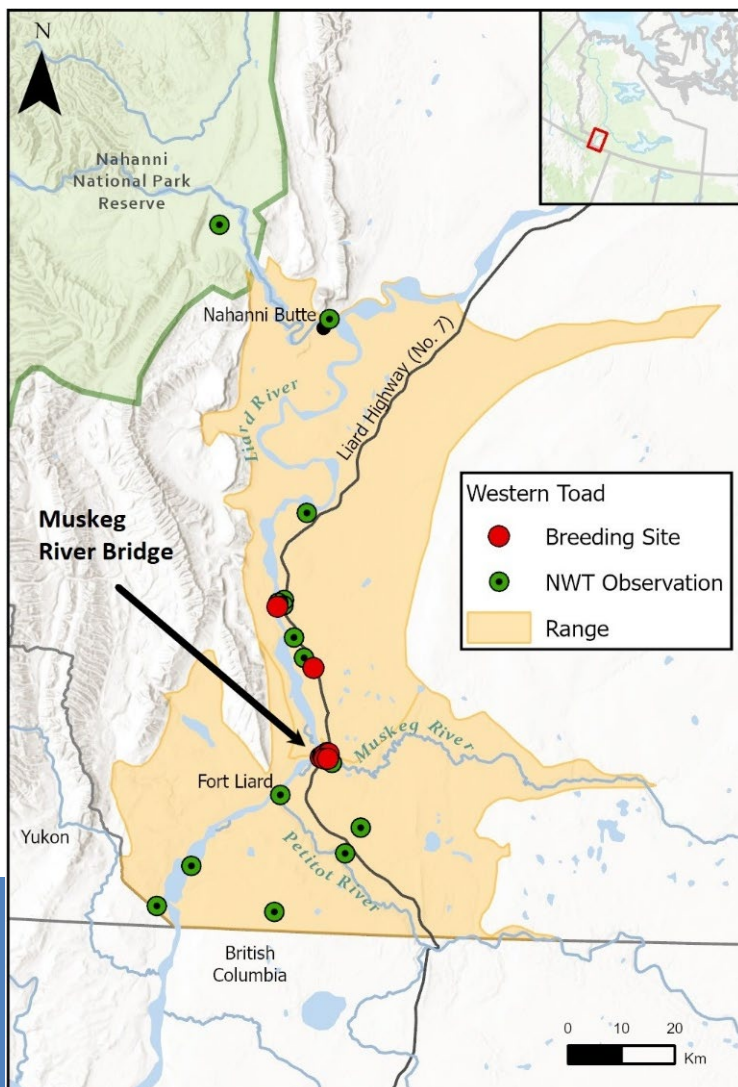
Eggs, Fraser Valley Conservancy



Tadpoles, Donna Schock

Where and When to Find Them

- Hibernate in winter, breed after ice breakup in spring.
- Breed in wetlands: ponds, lakeshores, rivers, streams, marshes, gravel pits, and roadside ditches.
- Migrate between breeding and wintering sites; may be found in water or on land.
- Active from late April to early October, often seen crossing roads.
- Key breeding site: Muskeg River Bridge area along the Liard Highway (km 44–47).
- Toad crossing signs are posted—slow down and watch for them.



If You are Working in Western Toad Habitat

1. Report Toad Sightings

- Notify the site manager.
- Inform on-site personnel about the location of the toads, tadpoles, or eggs.
- Report sightings or any toad deaths to WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca (send photos if possible).

2. Protect the Toads

- Do not disturb, touch, move, or remove toads, tadpoles, or eggs.
- Reduce speed and use flaggers near known toad areas.
- Watch for toads on roads, especially near Muskeg River Bridge.
- Prevent transmission of amphibian diseases by limiting contact of clothing, boots, and machinery with bodies of water.

3. Create Safe Zones

- Set up buffer areas around breeding ponds.
- Limit activities near toad habitats – use barricades or flags to mark them.

4. Prevent Disturbance

- Keep equipment well-maintained to avoid leaks and excessive noise.
- Store waste properly to avoid attracting predators.
- Avoid spills near water bodies or streams. Please report spills to the 24-Hour Spill Report Line at (867) 920-8130 (collect calls are accepted).

5. Check for Toads Regularly

- Toads return to the same breeding sites each year – monitor worksites even if no toads are seen at first.

Working in the gravel pit near km 46 of the Liard Highway, around the Muskeg River bridge?

Do not walk, drive, park equipment, or store supplies near the ponds. These ponds are used by western toads for breeding.