

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Animal Abstract

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**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Anaxyrus debilis insidior*  
**COMMON NAME:** Western Green Toad  
**SYNONYMS:** *Bufo insidior*, *Bufo debilis insidior*  
**FAMILY:** Anura: Bufonidae

**AUTHOR/PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Frost, D. R., R. W. McDiarmid, and J. R. Mendelson III. 2008. Anura: Frogs. In B. I. Crother (ed.), Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, pp. 2-12 SSAR Herpetological Circular 37.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** Lower part of Rio Bravo Valley, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** Syntypes: U.S.N.M. No. 2621, eight newly metamorphosed toadlets.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** Virtually world-wide, with more than 250 species in genus; two subspecies occur in *A. debilis*, but only *A. d. insidior* occurs in Arizona.

**DESCRIPTION:** A small, flat, green or yellow-green toad with small black spots and bars on its back. The black markings may be more or less united to form a network. Ranges from 1.125-2.0 in (2.8-5.1 cm) in length. Large, elongate, widely separated parotoids. Cranial crests weak or absent. Large parotoids extend onto sides. White below. Male has dark throat, while the throat of the female is yellow or cream. (Stebbins 1985,2003).

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** A small, flat bright green toad with many black spots, but not a network as seen in *Anaxyrus retiformis*. Black spots are interconnected rather than discrete as in *Anaxyrus debilis debilis*. Vocal is a piercing cricket like trill.

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color drawing (Stebbins 1985: Pl. 10)  
Color drawing (Stebbins 2003: Pl. 12)  
Color photo (Behler & King 1979: 254, 255)  
Color photo (USGS web site)  
Color photos (Tucson Herpetological Society web site)

**TOTAL RANGE:** Southwestern Kansas and southern Colorado to Zacatecas, Mexico, southeastern Arizona to eastern Texas.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Southeast corner of the state. San Simon, San Bernardino and Sulphur Springs Valley north to Safford and west to San Pedro Valley near Benson. In 1981, one observation reported for Maricopa County near Vekol Wash.

### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:** A secretive, burrowing, mostly nocturnal toad of arid and semiarid plains, valleys, and foothills. Will forage at twilight and during the day during heavy rains. Most active for brief times after and during rains. When threatened, it frequently flattens itself against the ground.

When trilling, they often hide under clumps of grass or other growth near water and are difficult to see. However, they may also call from exposed locations on muddy banks near water or from floating positions. The voice is a wheezy buzz lasting about 2-10 seconds and ending abruptly; usually given at intervals of 5 seconds or more. (Stebbins 2003).

**REPRODUCTION:** Breeds April-August but only in and when temporary pools and streams are formed from summer rains; occasionally in irrigation ditches and reservoirs. If conditions are not right, breeding may not take place. Eggs are arranged in long strings that are anchored to vegetation.

**FOOD HABITS:** Arthropods

**HABITAT:** In southeastern Arizona, grasslands, mesquite savannah, and creosote bush flats. Not usually found on steep slopes or in barren rocky areas.

**ELEVATION:** Sea level to 6,000 feet (1830 m), generally to around 4,000 feet (1220 m). Unpublished records in the HDMS (AGFD, accessed 2002), range between 2,025 and 5,080 ft (617-1548 m).

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Grasslands and mesquite savannah, also creosote bush flats.

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Unknown

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None  
**STATE STATUS:** None  
**OTHER STATUS:** Full Species listed PR (Secretaria de Medio Ambiente 2000)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:**

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:** Arizona fishing license required to take any amphibian.

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies needed.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** BLM – Phoenix and Safford Field Offices; FWS – San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge; State Land Department; Private.

**SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION****REFERENCES:**

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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