



WILD Kids

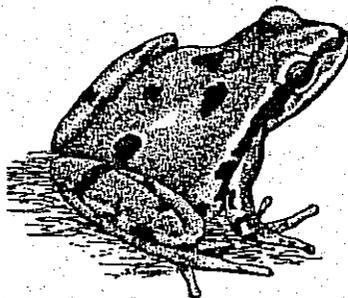


The Arizona Tree Frog, Arizona's State Amphibian

The Arizona tree frog can be identified as a tree frog by the pads or discs on its toe tips. This small frog is usually green, but can be gold to bronze. It has a dark stripe from the tip of its nose through the eyes and along its sides. Sometimes the back is spotted or even barred. Both the male and female have a whitish belly. Males have a tan, yellowish, or greenish throat. The scientific name, *Hyla eximia*, comes from Hylas, a figure in Greek mythology, and *eximia*, Latin for uncommon.

The Arizona tree frog can be found in the mountains of central Arizona and western New Mexico along the Mogollon Rim and into parts of Mexico. A few can even be found in the Huachuca Mountains in Cochise County. This frog prefers wet meadows and shallow grassy pools in oak, pine and fir forests above 5,000 feet elevation. Some individuals can even be found in trees!

Arizona tree frogs spend the cold months in hibernation, under logs or rocks in the forest. They will emerge in the summer to feed and breed. Breeding takes place from June to August and is triggered by our summer rains. The breeding call of the male is a low pitched clacking sound with one to fifteen or even more notes. The male will give his call many times in a row. Sometimes males will start to call when people are talking nearby. Like all frogs and toads in Arizona, these tree frogs are generally nocturnal although males may call on cloudy and rainy days.



Ringtail, Arizona's State Mammal



The ringtail of the Southwest is also known by the names of ringtail cat, miner's cat and cacomistle. It is not really a cat, but a relative of the raccoon and coatimundi. The scientific name is *Bassariscus astutus*. Ringtails are small, slender predators, about 30 inches long. Just about half of this length is its bushy tail which is ringed in black and white. The ringtail's coat is greyish-buff, darker along the back, and pale underparts. They have huge, round eyes that are ringed in white. The ears are also large and rounded. Similar to cats, their claws are partially retractable.

The range of ringtails covers most of the state of Arizona. These animals are found in a variety of habitats, from the Sonoran Desert to coniferous forests. They like rough, rocky areas with caves, crevices and broken ledges in which to find shelter. Hollow trees are sometimes used for shelter. The young are born in May or June. They are blind at birth and covered with downy white fur.

Ringtails are omnivores, eating fruits, berries, insects, lizards, frogs, birds and rodents. They are especially fond of woodrats. In turn, ringtails are preyed upon by larger predators like the great horned owl, coyote, and bobcat. Except when the female is with her young, they are solitary. They are also shy and nocturnal, so are seen by relatively few people.

The candidates for state amphibian that were not selected include the Colorado River toad, red-spotted toad and the desert spadefoot. The candidates for state mammal that were not selected include the javelina, Coues whitetail deer and desert bighorn sheep.

(over)

Activity II: Below is a Seek-and-Find puzzle. In it you will find 16 words describing the Arizona tree frog and the ringtail. The words in the puzzle are found on the front page and are highlighted. Words can be found forward, backward, diagonal and backward diagonal. Circle as many as you can find.

B	A	S	S	A	R	I	S	C	U	S	X	T	O
Q	P	F	X	S	T	O	J	G	M	O	N	S	M
K	W	O	H	T	H	I	C	B	U	Z	H	L	N
U	T	U	J	U	H	F	E	K	L	Y	I	Q	I
B	A	E	K	T	G	K	R	J	Y	K	U	A	V
L	E	L	L	U	F	H	Y	L	A	L	J	Z	O
T	X	B	P	S	D	I	J	H	P	T	M	X	R
S	N	A	O	A	S	B	Z	S	T	R	I	P	E
T	O	T	I	M	F	E	X	G	O	E	N	S	S
A	P	C	U	E	Z	R	C	F	I	E	H	W	O
R	L	A	Y	A	X	N	O	L	L	O	G	O	M
D	A	R	T	D	C	A	V	G	U	P	Y	E	E
O	S	T	R	O	V	T	B	D	Y	Q	T	D	F
O	D	E	E	W	B	I	N	S	T	W	G	C	I
W	O	R	W	S	N	O	C	T	U	R	N	A	L
X	T	K	Q	O	M	N	I	M	R	E	B	V	Z
S	O	L	I	T	A	R	Y	A	I	M	I	X	E

There is one extra word in this puzzle that describes both the ringtail and the Arizona tree frog's behavior. The word describes the time when both are the most active. Can you find it? (HINT: It is a 9-letter word and it is written forward.)

Activity II: Below are 3 questions that you may need the library or other reference books to help you answer. How many can you find the answer to?

1. The scientific name for the Arizona tree frog is Hyla eximia. The information from the front page states that eximia is Latin for uncommon, and Hyla comes from Greek for the mythical figure Hylas? Who was Hylas? Was it male, female, or even human? What did it do to get into mythology?
2. Find out where the scientific name for the ring-tail comes from. Is it from Latin, Greek, both, or some other language?
3. Find information on the other three mammals and amphibians that were candidates for the state mammal and state amphibian.

Activity III: Do you know what the state wildlife is for Texas, Oklahoma, or even Maine? Here is a good activity to help you find out more about other states wildlife.

First you will need to write a letter to each state's wildlife agency, like Arizona's Game and Fish Department. You will find their addresses in your library. Ask your teacher or librarian to help if you do not know where to look. In your letter ask for information on the official state wildlife species or state symbols (state bird, state fish, state mammal, etc.).

Once you have received the information (it may take a few weeks to get an answer), draw and color a picture of the state and it's wildlife. You will need two drawings of each wildlife species.

Third, cut out the second set of wildlife species. Keep them handy, for you will need them later.

Next, it is time to do some research. You will need to get information from the library on the wildlife that is found in Arizona. Check to see if that state's wildlife is also found in Arizona. If it is, place your cut-out drawing on a map of Arizona where the animal can be found in Arizona.

Here is an example. Oklahoma's state mammal, reptile and fish can also be found in Arizona. Do you know what they are?

How many other state's official wildlife can also be found in Arizona?

After you have found out about each state's official wildlife species, try their official plants, like official state flower, grass, tree, wildflower, etc. Have fun!!