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Houston Toad

Bufo houstonensis

Date of Listing: Endangered, 1970

Size: 2 to 3.5 inches long

Diet: Mainly insects and other invertebrates

Where it Lives: Deep sandy soils in pine or oak savannahs, with native bunchgrasses and flowering plants present in open areas. Require still or slow-flowing bodies of water for breeding. Found in deep sandy soils of east central Texas. Populations are fragmented throughout range.

Reproduction: Most breeding activity takes place in February and March. Females lay long strings of eggs in the water.

Population Numbers: 2002 population in Bastrop County is considered to be abundant. 2002 population numbers in the eight other counties where they currently live are not known.

Houston Toads hibernate during the cold winter months and wake when they are stimulated by warm evenings and high humidity. The breeding season then begins with the high-pitched, clear trill of male Houston Toads calling for mates. These males usually call in or near shallow water or from small mounds of soil or grass surrounded by water. The female responds to the calling male by moving toward the water. She then lays a long string of eggs in the water and the male fertilizes them as they are laid. Within seven days the eggs hatch and tadpoles emerge. It takes between 15 to 50 days, depending on the water temperature, for the tadpoles to turn into young toads. These young toads or toadlets are about half an inch long. Often these toadlets remain active year-round when the temperature and moisture are just right. Males will begin breeding when they are one year old. Females may not breed until they are two years old.

Houston Toads are endangered because of many factors including 1) habitat loss, 2) imported fire ants, and 3) pollutants.